

POEMS AND VERSES



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POEMS AND VERSES

1887-1897

BY

REGINALD LUCAS



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1897

INSCRIBED TO
THE COUNTESS BATHURST

*No poet's laurel wreath I claim,
I make no vain pretence to fame,
Humble and modest is my aim.*

*Not wasted should I deem my days
If here or there one thought, one phrase,
Could win from you a word of praise.*

*And if no good in them you see,
Yet, Lady, pray indulgent be ;
The verse is mine—the verse is me :*

*And though my merits be but few
Something to this is haply due—
The best I have I offer you !*

May 1897

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LINES

SUGGESTED BY THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE IN OLD PALACE
YARD, WESTMINSTER

THOU giant effigy, on thee
I, passing, chanced to turn my eyes,
And in thy place I seemed to see
An unsuspected vision rise.

It seemed that in a new-born age
All men were fashioned to thy mould ;
Each actor on the mortal stage
Had iron frame and heart of gold.

Each warrior Truth's commission bore,
And virtue graced each kingly mien ;
There lived no lady but was pure,
And worthy to become a queen.

Alas ! thought I, till Nature be surpassed
In stature thus, must human frailty last !

A RUIN ON LOCH NESS

OLD castle, up whose walls the ivy creeps,
Beneath whose shade sheep graze, while shepherd
 sleeps—
Do thy blind windows and thy gaping door
Alone survive the stirring days of war?
In idle fancy I descry thy walls
Erect once more around thy stately halls.
Captive in yon dark tower, a late won prize,
A lovely maiden strains her tearful eyes,
Awaiting for a sign upon Loch Ness
Of friendly sail, the hope of her distress ;
Yet is the tide unmoved save by the breeze
That moans to her responsive through the trees.
But hark ! along the slopes of yonder glen
I hear the rattling arms of horse and men :
The trumpets sound ; in haste the walls are manned ;
The maiden's rescue is the purpose planned.
Around thy mossy slopes the battle surges ;
The rippling of the lake a soldier's dirge is :
The castle's stormed, the maid to friends restored ;
And I awake—to find I am on board
A Loch Ness steamer, where there's nought heroic,
And everyone as stolid as a Stoic.

THE DYING SOLDIER

DYING, where all around was death,
A wounded soldier lay,
And scarce could draw a fainting breath
To greet the dawning day.

‘To die like this!’ he cried, ‘alone—
My sins all unforgiven!
How for the past shall I atone?
How can I hope for Heaven?’

Then, as the sun’s first trembling rays
Dispelled the clouds of night,
A skylark, trilling hymns of praise,
Flew upwards in its light.

The soldier smiled: ‘My prayer is heard,
My sins are set aside;
My soul ascends like yonder bird,
To God!’—And so he died.

CHRISTMAS

BRIGHT be your Christmas cheer ;
Go mirth and laughter free ;
Let Christmastide each year
Love's constant birthday be !

Forget the sceptic word
That chains Christ to the earth ;
Let only hymns be heard
That praise a Heavenly birth.

Ah, spare your vulgar scorn :
Give bitterness no place
That meets a Christmas morn
Without one thought of grace.

With joyous greetings come ;
Be loosened bonds re-tied ;
Let Home for once be Home,
And leave the World outside !

Christmas 1888

LOVERS' QUARRELS

CLOUDS across the summer sun,
When its highest noon is won ;
Empty vapour, in thy train
Comes no savage storm ; again
The rays, a moment since concealed,
Descend in newborn splendour.
Thus be lovers' quarrels—brief,
Check the smile, but bode no grief ;
Love returns, and stands revealed
More passionate and tender.

1889

LINES BY A LONDONER

THE trees have donned their summer green,
The meadows turn to spring,
The hedgerow minstrel pipes unseen,
The skylark on the wing.

Light shadows sweep the ripening corn
Before the western breeze,
And I, beneath a shady thorn,
Lie thinking at my ease.

All day my thoughts have been at strife,
This doubt my mind has crossed—
Whether the charms of country life
Or town attract me most.

Fresh from the town, the town's delights
Suit well my present mood ;
My fancy strays through memory's flights,
And whispers, ' That was good.'

But whilst I watch the sunlit plains
In vernal beauty dressed,
An inner consciousness remains,
And answers, ' This is best.'

Then Reason seemed her aid to lend,
And this distinction drew :
' Make yourself Nature's slave, my friend,
And pleasure slave to you.'

Knightshayes, 1889

SONG

A NIGHTINGALE sang to the silvery night
In the whispering bowers of June,
And the echo came back in a lovers' plight
To the notes of a well-known tune.

A lonely owl mopes and his vigil keeps,
As he watches the storm-clouds blow ;
And one lover stands by a grave and weeps,
For his plight lies buried below.

But angels are keeping their watch above,
Though the season be foul or fair,
And souls which were faithful in earthly love
Will be one day united there.

1889

A LESSON

It was a winter's evening,
I chanced to walk alone,
And, passing down a country lane,
A truth to me was shown :
It was a very simple truth,
And good to learn for thoughtless youth.

I walked along disconsolate,
And blamed my cruel fate
That I was forced on such a day
To linger out so late :
'Twas early dusk, and down the hill
A driving mist came damp and chill.

I recked not I was hastening home
To friends and ease and mirth,
That in this world of suffering
I'd not a care on earth :
I chose to think myself ill-used,
And as I walked my fate abused.

Beside my path a labourer
Was resting by a stile,
And, as I passed, his wrinkled face
Lit with a merry smile ;
And this I wondered at the more,
Marking the wooden leg he bore.

I saw he found it hard to walk,
His strength seemed well-nigh spent,
And at his back a bundle hung
'Neath which his figure bent :
His home was poor, his worldly lot
Less glad than mine, I doubted not.

Oh, what a lesson I could learn
From that good-humoured face ;
How great a joy contentment is,
Ingratitude how base !
And this it was, the simple truth,
So good to learn for thoughtless youth.

CARISBROOK CASTLE

I SPENT a day at Carisbrook,
I walked beneath the crumbling wall,
I visited each shrub-grown nook
And time-stained hall.

I mused o'er long forgotten ones,
Nor cared for simple facts to search,
Though these be panelled o'er the bones
In yonder church.

I conjured up a race of men
That thronged these courts in bygone days,
Such as can never be again :
What were their ways ?

Their lives were rude ; they learnt no art ;
Fighting and love their daily food ;
Their only pride a woman's heart,
Or foe, subdued.

The simple joys, the fond content,
Through each united household ran ;
Men were not weak, nor women bent
On aping man.

There stands the window, far renowned,
Through which a monarch stooped to crawl,
A hapless king, not yet uncrowned,
But doomed to fall.

Elizabeth, who in yon room
Passed to thine early resting-place,
Thou didst at least escape the doom
'Neath which thy race

Failed not through all its age to lie ;
So that the porter at the gate
Could claim a nobler destiny,
A kindlier fate,

Than those who bore the royal name
Of Stuart, destined to decline
From utmost pomp to deepest shame,
A ruined line !

Old castle, wilt thou not unveil
The stored-up evidence of years,
Rich with great deeds, and many a tale
Of hopes and fears ?

If all thy hidden truths were known,
So we could trace man's onward course,
Should we believe the world had grown
Better or worse ?

Even from thee we can but learn
That all things mortal must decay :
Thy strength, fame, power, all in turn
Have passed away.

Yet not thy beauty : through the land
The 'forward, forward !' of the world
Marks where the struggling armies stand
With flags unfurled :

Their cries of self, and change, I spurn,
Nor heed their loud ignoble rage ;
From thee a loftier theme I learn,
—Serene old age.

1890

TO ETON

KIND mistress of a mighty nation's youth,
Teacher of precepts that guide noble men,
Beneath thy fostering care we missed the truth,
That this was life unstirred by coming strain :
Such freedom once we knew, but ne'er may know
again.

A pure republic thou, where common choice
Elects its leaders—not by claim of birth,
But all whose deeds commend them hear the voice
That only rises to acknowledge worth,
With power to rank a schoolboy 'mongst the kings of
earth.

Priceless the lesson of those five glad years ;
Maxims predestined through all time to last ;
To flinch from evil, soon as it appears,
And love the features wherein good is cast :
Through such ordeal every hero must have passed.

1890

REVERIE

IN the corner of my garden
Where the red carnation grows,
And the summer breeze is laden
With the scent of many a rose,

Here I sit within my bower
Where the honeysuckle climbs,
And I pass the idle hour
In composing idle rhymes :

And the truths of all the ages
Stand revealed before my eyes :
In the corner of my garden
It is easy to be wise.

Gone the doubts that once perplexed me,
Gone the demon discontent,
Life is full of simple pleasures,
Each to some good purpose bent.

I forget the grievous problems
Of the overcrowded poor,
And their life of daily struggle
With starvation at the door.

Fades the gilded crown of mammon,
Dull and powerless to please ;
Drowned the endless roar of cities
In the humming of the bees.

False, oh false, the empty pleasures
Which the world once seemed to give :
Here I find the purest treasures,
—In my garden let me live !

*ON LEAVING AND RETURNING TO
ENGLAND, 1890-91*

SINCE Science steps from Pole to Pole,
Unheeding time and space,
And bids us count no distant goal
Australia's landing-place ;

Since distance is so little recked
That ere we miss our friend
We find he's been abroad and tracked
The world from end to end :

Why, then, for me 'twould be absurd
Such lofty theme to write
As from Childe Harold's lips was heard—
' My native land, good-night ! '

Yet let me feel, as I depart,
The pang that love creates,
And hope that here and there a heart
To kindred touch vibrates.

1890

If sometimes in my native land
I've longed for foreign skies ;
When, rich in fancied charms, some strand
Has shone before my eyes :

Sure, now I know that not one thought
Unfaithful was to thee,
My country ; absence has but taught
How dear thou art to me !

In every clime, howe'er serene,
I've found thee at my heart ;
Though boundless oceans roll between,
From thee I cannot part.

And when I bid my memory
Its travel tales recall,
I'll vow no land can match with thee,
And love thee best of all.

1891

FLOWERS

ON a red rose petal a dewdrop lay,
Like a tear on a maiden's cheek,
And I thought, ' Would its story be grave or gay
If this flower had lips to speak ? '

Oh, it's good to be blushing upon the tree
'Neath the kiss of the soft spring gale,
When the lark mounts high and his melody
Bursts forth like a lover's tale.

But it's sad when the season of bloom has gone,
And the wintry storms roll by,
And my rose is left on the tree alone,
Only waiting its turn to die.

Yet it's good to remember that on this stem
Sweet blossoms will live again ;
For God loves His flowers and deals with them
As He does with the souls of men.

Ottawa, 1891

LINES

ON THE PICTURE CALLED 'THE DOCTOR,' BY LUKE FILDES, 1891

THE doctor, doubtful of his healing art ;
The parent, conscious of a breaking heart ;
Which suffers most ?
To watch the failure of a high design,
The heart's most cherished treasure to resign,
Who knows the cost ?

To one this infant's fleeting failing breath
Speaks only of a struggle won by Death,
A child's life lost :
But there's a solace for a parent's love,
The thoughts of sweet companionship above
With Heavenly host.

1891

WINDSOR FOREST: EVENING

THE calm of evening floats upon the land,
With tender fading light the world is flushed ;
The cries of children playing close at hand
Go echoing far, where other sounds are hushed.

It is a holy time, that makes me yearn
For deeper draughts of wisdom, long to look
So full in Nature's face that I may learn
Her truths as in the pages of a book.

We are but flowers of a nobler growth ;
Some strong and gaily 'tired, meeker some ;
Like them we need the sunshine of the South,
Or droop if fierce winds blow and dark days come.

We needs must be a part of our surroundings,
With every change life's centre seems to shift ;
A sailor steers his careful course by soundings,
But we speed on our unknown way, adrift.

The sport of seasons and the slaves of time :
What have we then to live for, save this truth ?—
That we are passing to a realm sublime
Of endless sunshine and perpetual youth.

THE RIVER

DOWN from the hill, down from the hill,
Dancing and sparkling, ripples the rill.

Into the town, into the town,
Flows the wide river, turgid and brown.

Out to the sea, out to the sea,
Rolling away into Infinity.

1891

GLASGOW: IN CONTEMPLATION

IF half the vileness we could know
That hides in Glasgow's city,
Incessant as Clyde's stream must flow
Our tears of shame and pity.

1891

TO THE UNKNOWN GODDESS

WHERE first the primrose tufts are pale,
'Neath April's sun I found her ;
Light sounds were floating on the gale,
Fresh life was springing round her.

So fair a maid must be divine ;
'Twas meet I should adore her :
As pilgrim bends beneath his shrine,
I bowed the knee before her.

Then passed unseen—to learn her name
No longer I delayed there ;
But straight into my heart she came,
And ever since has stayed there.

1892

SONG

BLACK as a raven's wing,
Tapering high toward heaven ;
Though doomed at his birth,
No man upon earth
But finds for his sin some leaven.

Deadly as serpent's sting,
Light as a wafted feather ;
No sin so foul
That body and soul
Lose pardon and hope together.

Storm-cloud and rain in spring,
Sun when the old year's ending ;
Though hearts have got old,
And love has grown cold,
No sorrow is past all mending.

1892

LINES

WRITTEN IN DEEP DEJECTION, ON THE OBSERVATORY HILL,
CANNES, MARCH 24, 1893

GOLDEN light across the waters,
Sunset on the bay ;—
Grant me, God, to learn some lesson
From the closing day.

Slow before light floating breezes
Moves the white-winged fleet,
Setting homewards, idly drifting
From Sainte-Marguerite.

Landward stirs the hum of thousands,
Voices from the street :
Duty calls not, Pleasure bids us
Speed on flying feet.

Sombre shadows fold the mountains,
Fades apace the light ;
Twittering tree-folks from the branches
Pipe a last good-night.

Shines a land-star 'mid the pine-trees,
Where the woodman dwells ;
Deeper dyed the halo crimsons
Round the Estorels,

Like a royal robe descending
Down a giant's throne ;
And I stand in contemplation,
Faint of heart, alone.

Rest in perfect peace and order
Earth and sea and sky ;
Nature mutely lauds her Maker :
Mute, alas ! am I.

God created plain and mountain,
Put them in their place ;
God bestowed on me man's image,
Gave me of His grace.

Yet in me His light burns dimly,
Cold my heart and bare ;
Whilst without I see His glory
Shining everywhere.

'Tis our duty to be happy,
Each in his degree,
And to none is ampler measure
Given than to me.

Wherefore, then, these sad repinings ?
Shame to me are they :
Grant me, God, to learn some lesson
From the closing day.

Spoke a voice from out the heavens :
‘ If thou wouldst discern
Truth in that which thou beholdest,
’Tis not hard to learn.

‘ Perfect peace that rests on Nature
Comes of perfect heart,
One that knows no law but God’s law :
Choose thou Nature’s part.

‘ Tear the “self” from out thy bosom,
Be from passions free,
And the sweet content of Nature
Shall descend on thee.

‘ Shun life’s idle follies, heed not
Vain conceits of men ;
Follow Nature : thou need’st never
Be faint-hearted then.

‘ Never hush the inward spirit,
Hearken to its call ;
And on thy life’s day at closing
Heaven’s peace shall fall.’

CHAMOUNIX

THE flowers found in Alpine heights are decked in
gayest hue,
They spread their petals to the sun and catch the
heavens' blue ;
Mountains that reach above the clouds furthest from
earthly taint
Are robed in white as angels are—purer than mortal
saint ;
The quiet slopes of sunny lawns, the strength of pine
and rocks,
Care nothing for the life of towns, its daily strifes and
shocks.

In Nature's simple laws we see the things that
highest rise
Take colour more than lower things from life beyond
the skies :
Then let us vow, we worldly folks who live in
London town—
Who, learning this in coming here, forget it going
down—
To strive to rise to our full height, do nothing mean
nor base,
And hope, by living near to God, to meet Him face
to face.

June 1893

AN IMAGINARY INDIVIDUAL

THOUGH I walk through this world
Neither better nor worse
Than the rest of mankind
You are likely to find
In this great universe
Through Infinity hurled ;

Though my friends all declare
(And of friends I've a host)
I am certainly one
In a thousand alone,
To be envied the most
For what falls to my share ;

Though I know I've got brains,
And I'm rolling in wealth ;
Though I'm born to the fame
Of a time-honoured name,
And I'm blessed with good health
(Fortune pours when she rains) ;

Though I've reason to hope
That my name will go down
To the ages as one
Whose life's work was well done,
And who won fair renown
In the world's ample scope :

Yet this truth is instilled
In my mind beyond doubt :
I am only a part
Of a being—my heart
Is extinguished, gone out ;
—I'm a man unfulfilled.

1893

A MARRIAGE IN MAY

THE roses are climbing the garden rail,
The cuckoo is calling from yonder vale,
The scent of the meadows is on the gale ;
The spring has come, the spring !

The throstle is pouring his tuneful note,
The skylark is straining his tiny throat ;
So joyous the song that he sends afloat,
He seems no earthly thing.

As blithe is my heart as I take my stand
In front of the altar at Love's right hand,
And place on Love's finger the golden band—
The ring, the wedding ring.

The ways of the world I have seen and trod,
I've tasted life's nectar and felt life's rod ;
To-day I am standing in sight of God,
And hear His angels sing.

Doubt not that in Eden, ere time began,
Such infinite peace through the seasons ran,
Ere Adam discovered how weak was man,
And felt the serpent's sting.

As Eden's fair dawn is my hour of bliss,
I vow—let my pledge be my bridal kiss—
To seek, without ceasing, that life in this,
Till light from darkness spring.

For man has invented his sin and shame ;
The world has not altered ; God rests the same ;
His altar is Love ; there I'll light my flame,
And daily tribute bring.

1893

TO MY GODSON

ALAN REGINALD FARRAR LUCAS, BORN AUGUST 1893

LITTLE godson, take this chain,
Firmly linked, of sterling gold
(Eighteen carat, so I'm told) :
Why I give it you is plain :

I would have your life to run
Smoothly joined from stage to stage ;
Youth to manhood, honoured age
Ending fair what's fair begun.

Heed it well ; the metal's pure,
Made with care, too—here's a token
Of untarnished life unbroken :
Sterling metal will endure.

1893

TO MY GODSON

JOHN HEATHCOAT AMORY, BORN MAY 1894

FOR fourteen years—just half my life—
I've known your father, Master Punch ;
I've gathered many friends since then,
But he's the pick of all the bunch.

Your mother, Master Punch, I've known
For something less than fourteen years ;
But friendship's sometimes prompt, and time
Is not as long as it appears.

I do not know you, Master Punch,
Enough your character to tell,
And yet I stand responsible
In part for your upbringing—well,

Unless I'm altogether wrong,
You're just the man I want to find ;
By pedigree you ought to have
In sanest body sanest mind.

Some day long hence—say fifty years—
I hope to find my forecast right.
Your life, dear Punch, dawns bright enough ;
Please God, it always will be bright.

1894

SONG

WHEN a skylark rises, pouring
His carol forth, I wait,
And watch him swiftly soaring
High up to Heaven's gate.

Ah, Lady, you are gifted
With grace beyond the bird ;
To him my eyes are lifted :
'Tis finished—I have heard :

'Tis finished ; no thought lingers
Of him around me long ;
But you—I touch your fingers,
Nor lose you with your song.

1894

A MESSAGE

DEAR, in the turmoil of this life,
Though far apart we be,
When days are dark and perils rife,
Stretch out your hand to me.

Yes, guide my life ; then I'll not doubt
 'Twill take a brighter hue :
 My face turned to the world without,
 My heart, dear, turned to you.

1894

LINES

SUGGESTED BY THE NAME 'A. WELLESLEY' CARVED BENEATH
 THE BUST OF FOX IN UPPER SCHOOL, ETON

BENEATH impetuous Fox the name is 'graved
 Of one who England better served—and saved :
 Her children quaked at Fox's fiery word ;
 Only her foes, when Wellesley drew his sword.

1894

TO MILDRED LUCAS

WITH A GIFT

THIS little heart to you I send—
 A votive offering, oh friend,
 Not doubting you will comprehend
 What it imports :
 That I my homage do commend
 To your best thoughts.

Your kinship I am proud to claim ;
If not your blood, at least your name
And mine, dear cousin, are the same ;
 And I dare think
We're bound, if that pretence seems lame,
 With friendship's link.

Then take my gift, and have no fears
That stretch of space or lapse of years
Can undermine what friendship rears ;
 And credit me,
Whatever else my fault appears,
 With loyalty.

1895

FAREWELL

FAREWELL ! my summer's hope is past,
And winter comes, and dark despair ;
My day-dream was too bright to last :
Destruction waits on those who dare.

Remember—nay, remember not !
I know not which is greater pain,
Since we were friends—to be forgot
Or thought of with a calm disdain.

Farewell! There's nothing left to say ;
Yet, if my prayers for thee avail,
Since I must love thee still, I'll pray
For evermore—Farewell! Farewell!

1895

AN ELEGY

SAY whatsoe'er ye will, we live on trust :
Not mindful of the day of dust to dust,
Nor careful to regard how moth and rust
Devour apace,
Whilst passion spurs alike unjust and just
Down life's mad race.

Until, one day, o'ertaken unawares,
And heedless 'mid a thousand petty cares,
We find ourselves uprooted, as the tares
Sown in the wheat ;
Swept to the goal toward which man ever fares—
God's judgment-seat.

Haply none here can claim a breast quite pure,
None but some clouds of worldliness obscure ;
Yet, though from evil we be not secure,
All is not ill ;
Good somewhere lurks ; behind the clouds, be
sure,
The sun shines still.

I hold it true, we live in daily need
The dictates of our nobler selves to heed,
Deeming our lives have not been vain indeed
 If fate decrees
That men hereafter on our tombs may read
 Such words as these :

‘ One who sought high ideals without fear,
Not sternly grave nor smugly cold, lies here ;
Who flinched not, knowing that his end drew near,
 But sank to rest,
Well satisfied to say, with conscience clear,
 “ I did my best.” ’

1896

REVERIE

HARK ! the patter on the leaves
Massed beneath the dripping eaves ;
Field and forest, bleak and drear,
In the yellow leaf and sere ;
And I sit alone and sigh
For the summer days gone by.

Nothing is in life of man
But endures too brief a span.
I am sure you loved me then ;
Will you love me, dear, again ?

Shall I—shall I find you changed ?
Is it true your heart has ranged ?

No one cares for When and How ;
All of us are ruled by Now.
In the summer you were mine ;
All my life became divine :
Little recked I at the end
You would bid me call you ' friend.'

Friendship's not for such as we :
You are all or nought to me ;
In my world you stand alone,
And my heart's not made of stone ;
Through my veins runs youth's warm blood,
Love becomes my daily food.

If I listen, all around
Moans the world's unresting sound :
Cries of outcast and oppressed
Seeking shelter, seeking rest ;
Sorrow's not to them confined,
Body's not more keen than mind.

I have tasted all the things
Whence we deem enjoyment springs ;
And, I wis, no man would lose
Such as these, if he might choose :

Yet we find an empty shell ;
Heaven stands next door to Hell.

May your life be Heaven, dear ;
E'en in Hell I shall be near.
Haply in your hour of bliss
You will condescend to this :
Cool the torment of my thirst
With a smile—You loved me first !

Thus I sit alone and sigh,
Whilst I watch the daylight die ;
Down upon the sodden leaves
Raindrops patter from the eaves ;
And my heart lies dead and still
Here upon the window-sill.

1896

REVERIE

THE days will turn to weeks, the weeks will grow to
months and years,
The roll of time will blunt our griefs and wipe away
our tears ;
But 'mid the embers I shall find one spark is glowing
yet ;
And haply you'll remember, dear, and haply you'll
forget.

As storm-clouds mock with noon's eclipse the brightness of the dawn,
As rose-leaves, all untimely shed, reveal the naked thorn,
So blighted die the fairest thoughts that kindled as we met ;
And haply you remember, dear, and haply you forget.

Your name is changed ; amongst the proud you hold the proudest place ;
Fair maids, your fortune's hostages, reflect their mother's grace.
Your sun's at life's meridian, whilst my sun's for ever set ;
And haply you remember, dear, and haply you forget.

We meet with easy platitudes, you speak with brow serene ;
No tone, no gesture e'er betrays how dear the past has been ;
You draw me with no secret glance, repel me with no threat ;
And haply you remember, dear, and haply you forget.

The life of shattered purpose is monotony at best :
A little work, some empty years, whose only goal
is rest.

My fondest hope that at my grave your eyes may
once be wet ;

Then haply you'll remember, dear—and haply you'll
forget.

PART II

TRANSLATIONS



IRREVOCABILIS
Labitur hora,
Nulli optabilis
Dabitur mora ;
Ne sis inutilis
Semper labora,
Neque sis futilis,
Vigilans ora.

PAST all retrieving
The hour is gone,
Hope of reprieving
Is granted to none ;
Man's needs relieving,
Get thy work done,
And for sins, grieving,
By prayer atone.

OMNE bene,
Sine pœna,
Tempus est ludendi ;
Venit hora
Absque mora
Libros deponendi.

'Christmas at Bracebridge Hall' (Washington Irving)

EVER shameless,
Birchless, blameless,
All time's good for play, sir ;
Here's occasion,
Spare persuasion,
Pack your books away, sir.

1894

INFIDÉLITÉ

VOICI l'orme qui balance
Son ombre sur le sentier,
Voici le jeune églantier,
Le bois où dort le silence,
Le banc de pierre où le soir
Nous aimions à nous asseoir.

Voici la voûte embaumée
D'ébéniers et de lilas,
Où, lorsque nous étions las
Ensemble, ma bien-aimée,
Sous des guirlandes de fleurs
Nous laissions fuir les chaleurs.

L'air est pur, le gazon doux ;
Rien, rien n'a donc changé—que vous !

Gautier

HERE stands the elm : its shade
Still falls across the glade :
The sweetbriar twines and creeps
Up where the forest sleeps :
Here, too, the bench of stone
Where, darling, we alone
Watched many a flaming sunset come
and go.

And here's the dim retreat,
With lilac blossoms sweet,
Where we, with hands entwined,
To idleness inclined,
Made of the noonday hours
A paradise of flowers,
Sequestered from the teeming world
below.

Yes, 'tis the same sweet air,
The mossy banks are there :
And yet—adieux !
What changed and broke the spell,
And made my heaven, hell ?
'Twas you—'twas you !

1894

LA vie est vaine :
Un peu d'amour,
Un peu de haine,
Et puis—bon jour !

La vie est brève :
Un peu d'espoir,
Un peu de rêve,
Et puis—bon soir !

OH, life's worth naught :
A passion's sway,
An evil thought,
And so—good day !

But life won't last :
A gleam of light,
A dream soon past,
And then—good night !

1895

L'AUTOMNE

DANS la forêt chauve et rouillée
Il ne reste plus au rameau
Qu'une pauvre feuille oubliée,
Rien qu'une feuille et qu'un oiseau.

Il ne reste plus dans mon âme
Qu'un seul amour pour y chanter ;
Mais le vent d'automne qui brame
Ne permet pas de l'écouter.

L'oiseau s'en va, la feuille tombe ;
L'amour s'éteint, car c'est l'hiver . . .
Petit oiseau, petit oiseau, viens sur ma tombe
Chanter . . . chanter, quand l'arbre sera vert.
Gautier

IN the forest bare and brown
All the branches now are dead :
Here and there a leaf is blown,
With the leaves the birds have fled.

On one solace I rely,
Love's sweet song my soul has cheered ;
But the winds of autumn sigh
Till my strains can scarce be heard.

Gone the leaves, the last bird gone ;
Love fades, too—'tis autumn drear :
Come, bird, to my grave alone,
Come and sing when spring is here !

1896

INFELIX Dido, nulli bene nupta marito,
Hoc pereunte fugis, hoc fugiente peris.

PAUVRE Didon, ou t'a reduitte
De tes maris le triste sorte ?
L'un en mourant cause ta fuite,
L'autre en fuyant cause ta morte.

Lord Chesterfield

POOR Dido, by misfortune curst
Your choice of husbands must be reckoned ;
Your flight was due to death of first,
Your death was due to flight of second.

1896

PART III
IN MEMORIAM

ALAN LEVESON GOWER

DIED 1885

IT needs not, Alan, my poor verse
To prove my love for thee sincere ;
No need thy virtues to rehearse
To make thy memory seem more dear.

Dear comrade of an hour too brief,
Ah, let me hold this kindly truth,
Thou hast escaped from earthly grief,
Yet known the happiness of youth !

Else must we wonder that the clutch
Of silent Death's untiring hand
Spares those who languish for his touch,
And plucks the fairest in the land.

FLORENCE HENDERSON

DIED 1888

COULD it be true? All hope denied?
They whispered it with 'bated breath,
That birth had given way to death,
Cradle and coffin side by side.

Could it be true, that sweet young life
As forfeit paid to Nature's claim,
For having added Mother's name
To loving Daughter, faithful Wife?

Sweet Cousin, can it be the truth
That thou hast left this troubled sphere,
Thou, whom I ever held most dear,
Snatched in the noontide of thy youth?

Nay, Sister! for I bear in mind
The happiness of days bygone,
When three of us were knit in one
And all were brother-sister kind.

As on an upward mountain road
The climber vainly shades his brow
To pierce the distant space below
Where he has left some loved abode :

So toiling up life's rugged hill,
Though dimmed sometimes the view may be,
Unchanged shall be my thoughts of thee ;
In fancy thou art living still.

In thee the Graces met to bless ;
Rich were thy gifts, thy beauty rare,
With soul unsullied and as fair,
A mirror of God's holiness.

Thy happiness was born of love
And passed to us in sympathy ;
No wonder that they needed thee
To join the angel choirs above.

Ah ! Florence, may we learn to be
Worthy the lesson thou didst teach :
To walk with God and fearless reach
The gateways of Eternity !

1888

WALTER, EARL OF DALKEITH

ACCIDENTALLY SHOT 1886

DALKEITH, of princely house right worthy heir !
Couched on the heathery mountain side, alone
To meet untimely death thou didst prepare,
Whose place was 'neath the shadow of a throne.

Untimely? Nay, despite thine honoured name,
Thy present fair repute and future power,
May we not hold thy wound thine only claim
To man's compassion in that solemn hour?

No earthly pomp awaits thee: buried lies
Thy body; yet thy memory lives in this:
Our faith that angels watched thy closing eyes
And bore away thy soul to Heaven's bliss.

1890

CHARLES THOMAS LUCAS

DIED 1895

FROM belfry tower the solemn toll,
The silent throng, the loaded bier:
Uncover all, for Death is here,
To-day he calls his muster-roll.

March onward; take him to his rest,
(Toll out again the single bell,)
We follow, we who loved him well,
Pacing with those whom he loved best.

A wind-swept heaven, leafless trees,
The earth is drear and autumn frowns;
Yet sunshine lights the Sussex downs:
No season came but he loved these.

We needs must weep who held him dear,
 (Toll bell once more with iron tongue,)
We speak not, but our hearts are wrung :
Men pay large tribute with a tear.

From mansion where love rooted stood,
 Bear on to church ; here, too, he strove
 By building well to prove his love
For Him, Who finds all service good.

Nature, it seems, pays little heed ;
 These trees will bloom and live again,
 No clouds are greyer for our pain ;
Where shall we look then for his meed ?

The leaves will come again in spring,
 And in the halls that late were his,
 Where now the awe of silence is,
Ev'n here again shall laughter ring.

Yet, think not if we cease to weep,
 And life takes up its daily course,
 Our care for him lacks therefore force :
Fond thoughts, like pearls, lie hidden deep.

Then shut not up your hearts to-day,
 No meagre tribute is his due :
 Among us there be none or few
Shall pass more honoured down Death's way.

For who before the awful door
But fain would mark high-born and low
Bowed in a common grief, and know
'I, passing, leave the world less poor'?

Uncle, we mourn you to your end,
(Bell, send your last toll floating down,)
You bear our love for your life's crown,
Close wrought by those who called you friend !

Warnham, 1895

PART IV

EPILOGUES

WESTERHAM, JANUARY 1889

MRS. LEVESON-GOWER'S COTTAGE HOME

'My Little Girl,' 'Cox and Box,' 'Why Women Weep'

GOOD friends of Westerham, assembled here,
Forgive me if one moment I appear ;
And if to everything that's gone before
I add one word, don't write me down a bore.
For I have been deputed, ere we part,
To pay a tribute to the actor's art.
Then let us testify by our applause
We hold their acting worthy of their cause :
The cause of this most excellent frivolity,
Forget it not, is Mercy's tender quality.
Remember, by the shillings you have paid
You've rendered, everyone, most welcome aid
To those whose time sweet Charity employs,
'Those who control the 'Limpsfield Home for
Boys.'

Remember in this Home how rare relief
Is ministered to those who, born in grief,
Are reared in dreary ways where Heaven's light
Finds out no ways : where joy is turned to blight
And sorrow follows sorrow stage by stage,
Till cheerless youth decays in crabbed age.
Then let us welcome to the Surrey hills
These hapless ones : bid them forget their ills,
And in our genial clime throw off dull care,
Worship the sun and learn the world is fair.
Well, then, let's find the means : then we've the
power

To give to them at least one happy hour.

And now, what, think you, have we got to say
Of those who've lent their services to-day ?
Artist, and gambler, printer, one in three,
Welcome to Westerham the busy B :
Whether as Bouchier, Barford, Box, or Banting,
I think we'll own no quality was wanting.
Bouncer recounts a hundred warlike scenes :
Militia telling 'tales to the Marines ;'
Sir Redmond Scarlett in a passion flies,
Then melts beneath his wife's capricious eyes :
No *Dudgeon* left, no oath to soil his lip with,
He'll sing and dance whilst he's a *Foote* to *Skipwith*.
Poor Linford's love ! in vain he wooed his ward :
The uncle suffered and the nephew scored.
'Did monsieur call me ?' Agile son of France
Would wed Babbette, 'if he had confidence.'

Cox, cheerful manufacturer of hats,
With strange experience in renting flats,
Thanks for thy tuneful note and merry jest—
But, prithee, by what tailor art thou drest?

Ladies, my humble verse aims not at you :
Let better poet pay the homage due ;
To praise your acting or to sing your grace
In foolish lines like these were out of place.
The play is over : drop the curtain, please ;
Let's home to bed : go, actors, take your ease.
And, Mrs. Leveson-Gower, if there be aught
In wishes, know that many a kindly thought
Goes with you in your generous, noble deed
To help our poorer brethren in their need.
And let no sour cynic wish to sever
This kind of thing from work in your endeavour ;
On practical good will we take our stand :
Go, Merriment and Mercy, hand in hand.

PROLOGUE

CANNES, FEBRUARY 1894

GOLF CLUB THEATRICALS

IN olden days, when Drama's self was young,
Ere curtain rose, or prompter's bell was rung,
The rule was this—that to the footlights came
The genius of the play, to noise its fame.

Our plays are many now, our prologues few :
'The old order changeth, yielding place to new ;'
Nature decrees : to Nature Art replies :
True Art, resembling Nature, never lies.
But in true Art, when well-worn tales are told,
New order changeth, yielding place to old.
And when to France, unpractised and unknown,
Came Scottish golf, by some good fortune blown,
New order rose beneath our Southern skies,
Old as the Northern hills that marked its rise.
And as our services are due to-night
To the Cannes Golf Club, surely 'tis but right
'(Since Art and Sport go ever hand in hand)
That Drama bid Golf welcome to the land ;
Revive the disused prologue in its name :
Time-honoured custom to time-honoured game.
Then, golfers, rest awhile : 'the play's the thing :'
But not your kind of play—you've had your fling.
Come, actors, on : these seek another goal
Than yours—they love not being in a hole !
But, should such fate befall, for help they'd seek
In friendly 'claque,' where you might use a
 'clique.'
Come, patient lovers, 'stymied' by hard Fate ;
Come, villains, on, but mark where 'bunkers'
 wait ;
'Drive your long ball,' or 'put' with all your
 skill :
Do all you can : we'll see you 'dormy' still !

Let Golf and Drama flourish and prevail,
 No carping tongue their twin delights assail ;
 Beneath my flag be nought but kindness found :
 Russia, France, England, meet on common
 ground ;

Brandish the club in friendship, not in strife,
 Clasp hands, and call good-comradeship to life !
 Monseigneur, then, accept our fair intent ;
 From Stage to Golfland be this message sent—
 Till Faith and Friendship fade, till Sport lies
 dead,

Wide stream your honoured stripes of white and
 red !

Spoken by Mdlle. de Labrosse

MIDDLETON, JANUARY 1895

‘ Dick Ranger,’ ‘ The Goose with the Golden Eggs,’
 ‘ A Pair of Lunatics ’

HOLD, Prompter ! Ere you let the curtain fall,
 Ere light and life be banished from this hall,
 Give me a moment’s grace to pluck up heart
 And say a word or two before we part.
 Not anxious I the willing horse to flog :
 Yet, pray have patience for my Epilogue.
 I come to sing no praise, impute no blame :
 A fair and friendly summing up’s my aim.

Well, first our lunatics escaped from Stoneleigh—
Let's tell them that, if ever they feel lonely,
Or have fresh doubts and wish to reconcile 'em,
We'll welcome them again to this Asylum.

And now, my Muse, inspire me : I'm perplexed
To find fit words for those who follow next.
At sight or mention of these gracious three,
Chivalry halts and homage bends the knee :
Villiers or Woodville be your household name,
To you our admiration goes the same !

Stern Lady Woodville, with a brutal spouse,
Insulted by a brigand's proffered vows,—
Cheer up ! for Angelina, poor dear lady,
Was e'en embraced by him of record shady.
(Though I must add that I've seen many plays,
But ne'er a brigand with such winning ways.)
We've not seen Hatsmouth yet ; let's hope his
 charms

Will soothe hurt feelings and stay all alarms.

Sweet Dorothy, for you we sorrow most :
At once a lover won, a lover lost !
Well, since he can't return from this last range,
Accept us all your lovers in exchange !
And you, small Page, we find you, Page, too brief :
As paper-knife to page was name of thief :
Yet grow, dear page, expand with judgment ripe,
Expand in volume, too ; we like the type.
Last, author-actor, take your meed of fame :
A twofold honour paid to twofold name :

A tearful tribute is 'Dick Ranger's' due ;
And, Gilbert Elliot, our best thanks to you !

Of you, Sir Stafford Northcote, I'm ashamed :
If Mr. Speaker saw you, you'd be 'named ;'
Your House of Commons manners won't do here :
Less rowdyism, please, or disappear !
Now, Mrs. Turby, you're a worldly dame—
Though we're inclined to like you, all the same :
Impart to your rude, avaricious man
Some of your native sweetness, if you can.

Well, Clara, we've seen how your golden goose
Was rescued from the lawyers' selfish use ;
Give it to me : I'll shower forth your wealth
In bounteous store of happiness and health.
Lord Jersey, may I hope you'll pardon me
If with your name I make a little free ?
'Qui quid per alium facit, facit per se'—
That's Latin, and its meaning is, Lord Jersey
Accepts my agency, however weak,
And bids me on his own behalf to speak :

Then take his golden wishes ; may you thrive
And prosper, one and all, in Ninety-five !

HONINGHAM, JANUARY 1896

DISTRICT NURSE FUND

‘Cut off with a Shilling,’ ‘Kiss in the Dark’

LADIES and Gentlemen, in olden days
An epilogue concluded all good plays ;
And, since these are the best plays we can do,
’Tis right to speak an epilogue to you.
We hope your favour, then, we’ve so far merited
That you won’t leave us wholly ‘disinherited ;’
But let us think that, as we go our ways,
We take from you some legacy of praise.
Though understand at once that Gaythorne’s
willing
To be cut off for ever with a shilling,
And sacrifice all else on earth beside,
So long as he’s not parted from his bride.
For, see, the Colonel, versed in war’s alarms,
Surrenders meekly and lays down his arms ;
Her sweetness teaches him the nobler part—
To sheathe his sword and open wide his heart.
No thousand uncles could a man deter,
If she loved him, from wedding such as her.
Nor he as happy husband stands alone ;
Who is there here but envies Pettibone ?
Had he not been a fool and risked his bliss
By jealousy, there need have been no kiss.

What is it, though, that all his fuss discloses ?
There's very little harm in three black noses.
With such a charming wife there might have been
A most deplorable domestic scene.
She, as it is, forgives him and forgets ; he
Is left serene again with his dear Betsy.

These are our characters ; I name you them :
'Tis now for you to praise them or condemn.
But, think you what you may, it seems to me
There's one about whom all of us agree :
'Twere wrong of me our doings to rehearse,
And make no mention of the District Nurse.
Not vainly have we posed, and joked, and punned,
If we've brought something to the Nurses' Fund.
At times like this, at seasons of good cheer,
'Tis well to think on days when all is drear—
When from the homes of sickness and of grief
Goes up the cry for comfort and relief.
Great honour, then, be yours, can ye maintain
That here at least that cry comes not in vain :
That ye are ready in each case to send
A skilful ministrant, a welcome friend,
On every aching brow a hand to lay,
And in their 'darkness' 'kiss' the gloom away.
The 'Quality of Mercy is not strained ;'
That's Shakspeare ; let its meaning be explained
That mercy, teaching brotherhood in blood,
Bids charity go forth in one wide flood,

Sweep selfishness away where e'er it grows
And gather strength and sweetness as it flows.
Well, if you hold with this I call on you
To give your thanks to her to whom they're due.
In friendship's spirit she takes up your cause,
In friendship's name I ask for your applause ;
A valued friendship this and one time mellows :
Long may you have a friend like Mrs. Fellowes !

And Ailwyn Fellowes, since it is my task
To speak this epilogue, I needs must ask,
(Since for myself no right to speak I claim)
To be allowed to finish in your name :

He sends his greetings forth with yours to mix ;—
Good luck to one and all in Ninety-six !

LONGFORD, FEBRUARY 1896

‘Liberty Hall’

AT SALISBURY FOR L. & S.-W. RAILWAY WIDOWS AND ORPHANS

TRADITION tells us that in days of eld,
As requisite to all good plays 'twas held
To lend a graceful ending, and in token
That all had played their best, there should be
spoken

Some lines ; and as a tail completes a dog,
So plays all tailed off in an epilogue.

New order reigns, now turning out the old,
Without a tail the modern tale is told :
Maybe 'tis cut off bluntly at the 'tag'
Because the modern age provides no 'wag.'
No wag am I, nor venture to revive
The custom others failed to keep alive :
Yet in my modest way I dare rehearse
Our doings, though mine be but halting verse.

We read in Scripture that 'tis well to soften
The lot in life of widow and of orphan,
And with this gentle teaching it accords
For orphans' benefit to 'take the boards.'
The London and South-Western Railway staff
Bid you to pause and ponder as you laugh
(If laugh you will at what we dare to act)
And with your fancy blend a little fact.
E'en Mr. Todman in his deep distress,
The love-lorn Robert e'en I pity less
Than those poor wights who find in childhood's hour
Drear poverty and loneliness their dower.
Sure, charity can find no nobler end
Than this—the cause of orphans to befriend.
Nor shall they by our efforts gain alone ;
For pleasure's path and charity's are one.
Twere wrong to speak of our intentions thus,
Without admitting that it profits us,
Who flee awhile life's round and daily task,
To seek fresh humours 'neath the Thespian mask.

A pastime 'tis so gay and pleasure-giving,
It almost solves the doubt, 'Is life worth living?'
I' faith my living on my while 'twere still worth
Could I but hope my life held one Blanche Chilworth.
All grace of being, graciousness of heart,
Nature's supremest effort framed in Art.

And, prithee, for discourtesy don't blame me,
Since speaking thus implies no slight to Amy :
I make my homage known if I declare
To such a sister she's a worthy pair !

Perhaps to shun comparisons were safer,
But I must add a compliment to Crafer :
Her tones are dulcet, and her pretty ways
The sweetness of her character betrays :
Light-handed, nimble-footed, swift to please,
Who'd ask for finer qualities than these ?
To captious criticism he'd incline
Who'd grumble at her taste for 'sherry wine.'
Miss Hickson, I admire, I protest,
Chiefly because she's always so well dressed.
I love her for her modish style of hair,
And dainty feet 'twined coyly 'neath her chair.
Her brother to my mind's a stammering ass
(But that's between ourselves, so let it pass).

Your Brigginshaw is clever, Colonel Davis,
But let's thank heaven he's a 'rara avis.'
I shouldn't think he'd ever win a lady :
His clothes are much too flash ; and he's too shady.

No need to fear your play will go amiss
If in your cast ye reckon Quintin Twiss.
He keeps us ever poised 'twixt smile and tear ;
We wish he'd ' make a long stay ' now he's here.
Nor need ye trouble to provide a claque
If for your leading man ye count on ' Mac,'
Actor and manager and courtly guest,
Of amateurs in every sense the best !
Old stagers these, like you, Sir William Young :
The prompter's bell full oft have ye heard rung,
And doubtless still, whene'er ye hear it ring,
Ye say within your hearts, ' the play's the thing.'
Nor ye who enter here all hope abandon
As long as ye've for prompter Mr. Landon ;
Unseen, unheard (we hope), a modest lot,
But nought by him unseen, and nought forgot.

Well now, the curtain's down ; we've done our plays ;
To-morrow we go scattering down life's ways.
But first by us, with those we've sought to aid,
Let it be vowed this tribute shall be paid—
Thanks from the guests to hostess and to host,
Thanks for relief from those who need it most ;
And whensoever these doings we recall,
We'll christen Longford Castle, ' Liberty Hall.'

Spoken at Supper

PART V

VERS DE SOCIÉTÉ

ON VEGETARIANISM

OH, save us from isms
And fads that cause schisms
In family circles and separate friends ;
'Tis ingratitude base
To fly in the face
Of Nature, by spurning the good things she
sends.

To give hay to his cats,
To feed horses on rats,
Were the work of a fool, unless done for a
joke :
Such a man might decide
To upset his inside
By changing his diet for that of his moke.

It is surely agreed
That a man ought to feed
Upon meat, whilst his prudence his appetite curbs ;
Then long let us flourish
On good joints that nourish,
And leave to our sheep and our cattle their herbs !

1890

REPLY TO AN INVITATION

FROM 'mid July to the end of September,'
By aid of this card I shall surely remember
That away in a sunny Swiss valley
To your friends (of that host I'm a fortunate member)
You're, Madame, 'at home in your chalet.'

When jaded and worn I despondently mope,
In official seclusion kept close as the Pope,
My languishing spirits I'll rally,
With thoughts that ere long I'll be climbing the
slope
To find you 'at home in your chalet.'

I'll fancy I'm breathing the cool mountain breeze,
Or that, stretched in sweet idleness under the trees,
With the fugitive hours I dally ;
So the goal of my hopes shall be over the seas,
And with you 'at home in your chalet.'

1890

TO A LADY

WHO BLAMED ME FOR GOING HOME WHILST SHE WAS SINGING

AH! blame me not if yestere'en
Too early home I went ;
Platonic patience is not, sure,
The highest compliment.

I could not talk with you apart,
I might not sit and muse ;
I needs must talk—such talk as serves
The senses to confuse.

Impatient? Yes, perhaps I was
Impatient of the crowd :
I took my thoughts away for fear
Of thinking them out loud !

1894

IN AN ALBUM

YOU honour me with your request
To 'write you something : ' I protest
My eagerness to do my best :
If that's done ill,
My want of wit will stand confessed ;
Not want of will.

What shall it be? Sedate or gay?
The passing humour of the day,
Or deeper thoughts that with us stay?
Cribbed and confined
I fear my thoughts at best betray
My shallow mind.

I take these signatures; a few
Are known to me; the rest are new:
These people all, if we but knew,
Strange tales could tell:
Such as would hold us, as they grew,
Beneath their spell.

No mortal yet was set by Fate
In lowly and obscure estate,
And none lived lives degenerate;
But all must teach
Some truths, if we but contemplate
The ways of each.

I write my name upon this page
As one who holds no sex, no age,
No rank unfitted to engage
In such fierce strife
As most of us are doomed to wage
Throughout this life.

Then all of us should have a care
In case we're called on to declare
A sentiment—though Nature spare
Us little wit—
To hold what's honest, think what's fair,
And publish it.

1895

IN AN ALBUM

OH! pity the plight of a non-hunting man
'On what songs call a 'fine hunting morning,'
When he sees all the breeches so spick and so span
That the other men's legs are adorning.

With the joys of the chase all the ladies and men
Are consumed ; with delight their eyes glisten ;
I try to be wise and profound—all in vain ;
I talk glibly, but no one will listen.

Maybe all the morning I'm busy enough ;
Then lunch—with the ladies who don't hunt ;
And I think that perhaps I had best try to bluff,
Say I could if I would, but I won't hunt.

But I find they've a way (and an awkward one too)
Of men's motives and minds analysing,
And the promptness with which my imposture's seen
through
Is as painful and plain as surprising.

I hear with delight Mr. B.'s had a fall,
 (I hope it's disfigured him rather,)
At least I can say I've not fallen at all
 (In their eyes)—for I couldn't fall farther.

But when Captain D. stirs a tumult of woe,
 Lame, muddy, but glorious, though shaken,
How I envy his wounds, how I wish I could go
 In his stead to the bed where he's taken ;

And sleep and forget I'm a non-hunting man,
 Or dream I'm a regular dasher :
Meanwhile I am doomed to be under the ban
 Of a useless and nincompoop masher.

1896

IN AN ALBUM

LADY, not lightly I esteem
 Your leave to sign here as your guest ;
But verses too? I fear they'd seem
 Poor things at best.

With feeble wit and halting pen
 I search my fancy through and through
For pleasing theme ; nor search in vain,
 —I'll write of you.

Alas ! this book would scarce contain
The thoughts which forthwith flow apace ;
And others, haply, might complain
Of want of space.

They'd say, ' Confound this cheek of his ;
He crowds us out, and dares to tell
To us, her friends, how rare she is ;
We know it well.'

A fragment this—no poet I ;
Yet since it bears a fair intent,
Accept it, Lady, graciously ;
Say, 'tis well meant :

And granting this I dare engage
Its merits are not mine alone,
But shared by all who sign this page ;
Its faults my own.

1896

WRITTEN IN A BOOK

ATTACHED TO A LADY'S CHÂTELAINE

DEAR Lady, to hang here I'm fain,
'Tis a rise in position, I vow,
To hang henceforth at your châtelaine
Who was prone at your feet until now.

1896

TO A LADY

WHO ASKED FOR A MOTTO FOR HER BOOK

YOU bade me, Lady, as I left
Send you a motto of my own :
Ah ! would I had a pen more deft
To reap where you have sown !

I'd find my heart a fertile soil,
Though poor and barren were my brain,
And reaping were a grateful toil,
And you'd not ask in vain.

Alas ! though fond my wish may be,
Of noble thoughts I've none or few ;
No motto you must hope from me,
Yet I'll take one from you.

Then grant me as I go my ways,
(If you so far will condescend,)
To take for mine—'tis Shakspeare's phrase—
'Your servant and your friend.'

FOR AN ALBUM

THE strength of a chain, they say,
Is the strength of its weakest link ;
The strength of a friendship's sway
Is tested by time, I think :
It lasts, or it fades away,
Like writing in vanishing ink.

Some years now since first we met !
Well, time doesn't make one old :
Some old hearts are glowing yet
When young ones are bare and cold ;
It depends how the stage is set,
And the way that the tale is told.

Now time has applied the test,
Our link, too, has felt the strain ;
Our meetings are rare at best,
We come face to face again :
Let us have the whole truth confessed,
Is it broken, our friendship's chain ?

Is there ever a link to mend,
Must we fashion it all anew,

Or is it quite sound your end ?
It's firm from my point of view.
See, there is the question, friend ;
To answer it rests with you !

1896

*IN ANSWER TO A LETTER FROM COLONEL
SAUNDERSON, M.P.*

LOUGH ERNE, OCTOBER 1896 ; WITH A CARICATURE

COLONEL, I deem it honour high
To have engaged your pen,
A humble cockney stranger I—
You, Prince of Irishmen.

Yet since you've dipped your nib in ink
To draw me, I must feel
No little pride ; it shows you think
Me worthy of your 'steel.'

What matter if you make of me
A lantern-jawed black ape ?
I don't think I'd object to be
A fiend in human shape,

So long as I might hope to read
Such pleasing lines as those
Which constitute a prize indeed
The letter you enclose.

Ah, Colonel, if I 'suit the Lake'
 And dare come back again,
 Not doubtful of the friends I make,
 Then I've not lived in vain.

It's true that when I go afloat
 I'm not the slightest use,
 And that my 'omnipresent' coat
 Comes in for much abuse.

It's also true (to my disgrace)
 Rough seas I cannot dare,
 And had to shun the final race
À cause de mal de mer.

Yet haply as I wade once more
 Through Piccadilly mud,
 I'll cogitate that ancient saw—
 'Water's less thick than blood.'

There are not, nor will ever be,
 So far as I discern,
 The ties of consanguinity
 Betwixt me and Lough Erne.

Yet fonder thoughts, I don't suppose,
 From out my heart I'd draw
 If I were really kin with those
 Who dwell upon its shore.

Higher, still higher, mount your fame ;
 And fortune in excess
 Be unto all who give the name
 Of home to ' Castle S.' !

If, haply, once when stars are bright
 Out on the tide you spy
 A lonely phantom of the night
 Moving 'twixt earth and sky—

Bestir you not ; or if you deign,
 Take it—'tis yours to share—
 My heart, till I come back again,
 I'll leave it in your care !

Crom, 1896

EPIGRAM

POOR poet, by the Muse unloved !
 I write soft odes ; a moment after,
 I look to see if you're much moved,
 And find you quite convulsed—with laughter !

1897

EPIGRAM

NOT here ; my notebook hides my verse, and I,
 Poor uninspired bard,
 Deem it were best to shun publicity,
 And so save your regard.

1897

IN AN ALBUM

THEY said 'twas too far to come down for one night,
All this way, just a ball to attend ;
Dear Lady, no way were too far if one might
Expect to find you at the end.

1897

TO A LADY

WHO GAVE ME A WHITE ROSE

'TWAS left by some one in the room,
Impossible to say by whom ;
'Why I'm in luck,' I said, 'to-night,
'Tis treasure-trove, and mine by right.'

'More proper it would surely be
That I should give it you,' said she ;
She took it ;—(no fine speech to quote)—
I bowed, and put it in my coat.

Ah, never bloomed a fairer flower
Than you in this your girlhood's hour ;
Not lovelier, not a purer white,
Was this same rose than you last night !

To-day 'tis faded, dried, alas !
And will your mood as quickly pass ?
The friendship that I claim from you,
Will that be withered, faded, too ?

Your petals shrivel up, and close ;
Does life's rough contact kill you, rose ?
Ah, Lady, may it never be
So with the faith 'twixt you and me !

The living essence, inmost heart,
In these I may not claim a part ;
But Friendship has its own perfume :
With this last night you filled the room.

Then promise—will you condescend ?—
That I may always be your friend,
That frank converse and sympathy
Shall never fail 'twixt you and me.

I pray your life may everywhere
Be strewn with garlands soft and fair :
From out your path I've plucked one rose ;
Flowers fade—their spirit never goes !

1897

TO A FRIEND

LADY, I know amongst your friends
You reckon many a name
Of those to whom kind Fortune lends
The panoply of Fame.

How can I hope, such rivals by,
My claims you'll tolerate,
When generals and statesmen vie
With poet laureate ?

For me no soldier's laurel crown,
No statesman's thought sublime ;
I may not even hope renown
Will ever touch my rhyme.

Yet not to warriors, poets, those
Who rule the land, is due
A nobler name in verse or prose
Than ' friend ' conferred by you.

If this be mine, let come who may
I fear no rivalry :
Soldiers and poets, statesmen, they
Shall rather envy me.

For they to win your smiles have brought
Proud records, titles high ;
Whereas to help me I have nought
Save this—that I am I !

The Gods' best gifts on you descend
Where'er your steps be bent !
And if I ever stay your friend
I'll ever be content.

‘THE VAMPIRE,’ NEW GALLERY, 1897

PAINTED BY PHILIP BURNE-JONES : VERSES BY RUDYARD KIPLING

A POET there was and he made his verse
 (Even for you and me !)
 Of drunken Tommys and things much worse
 (And as to their merits were views diverse),
 But he wrote for a public who filled his purse
 (Even for you and me !)

*Oh, the East he knew and the beast he drew
 And Nature caricatured
 Belong to the poet who knew very well
 (And now we think it was easy to tell)
 How the public could be lured.*

The poet was raised to a pedestal high
 (Even by you and me !)
 And it might have been otherwise—if not—why?
 (This style isn't hard, as you'll find if you try)
 But its charms may possibly pall by-and-by
 (Even on you and me !)

*And it's rather a shame and he's rather to blame
For writing such stuff as this—
His imagination we know's immense
(But this isn't grammar and isn't sense)
And no one can say that it is !*

1897

little book I give to you;
treat it with contempt;
"mediocre" thought & thought,
in twaddle not exempt.

that what the book is, so am I,
yet you condescend,
with all my faults - I know not what
treat me as your friend.

best my feeble wit can give
in you'll find revealed:

best that's in me, whilst I live
you, not less, I'll yield!

H. L.

Haverland

22 22 1898

POEMS AND VERSES

BY

REGINALD LUCAS



LONDON
PRIVATELY PRINTED

1898

DEDICATION.

MY DEAR LADY SKELMERSDALE,

For the sake of a Friendship which long ago exceeded its period of probation, and gains an added value with each year, I offer you this little book.

Lord Tennyson once wrote to a correspondent, 'By all means write if you find solace in verse, but do not be in a hurry to publish.' In printing what follows I do not aim at 'publication,' any more than in private discourse I desire to lecture mankind; but to write for oneself is as unprofitable as to talk to oneself.

Therefore I dare to present my modest output of verses to a few; and I would have them appear under the ægis of your name.

Ever yours faithfully,

REGINALD LUCAS.

207 PICCADILLY,

March 1898.



POEMS AND VERSES.

22ND JUNE, 1897.

O H, rich in honour and renown,
The perfect fulness of the time
To-day has made your throne sublime,
And added lustre to your crown.

From northern snows, from tropic sands,
Your subjects come with one accord
To hail you as their 'over-lord,'
Victoria, Queen of many lands !

The veil is rent, your flag unfurled
Proclaims a loftier destiny ;
Who follows in your train shall be
Amongst the vanguard of the world !

And sixty years have taught the truth,
That in this teeming world of men
To strive and labour is not vain,
Age *may* fulfil the dreams of youth.

For never race nor clime has seen
Such mighty deeds so greatly wrought,
Such projects to achievement brought,
As England, since it called you Queen.

The sceptre that you found was set
In high traditions, proudest lore ;
You took it in your hands and bore
It on to nobler records yet.

Not wanting are the prophecies
Of those who brood on evil things,
Of wreck where fond tradition clings,
Of shattered faiths, of broken ties.

What shall it be ? Shall England claim
In sixty years as great a throne ;
Or will it be despoiled, undone,
And ' King ' a half-forgotten name ?

Far be the day ! Yet, if 'tis true,
This rumoured writing on the wall,
That England's crown is doomed to fall,
And none shall wear it after you ;

Yet based upon the 'stablished past,
Your reign that draws towards its term,
Shows you could hold the sceptre firm,
Our purest Sovereign, if our last.

22nd JUNE, 1897.

3

Great Lady, on this day of days,
No prouder thought than this can be—
Your realms are peopled by the free,
Your realms are ringing with your praise.

VOX DEI.

LIGHT and darkness, sea and earth,
God made ; unto man gave birth ;
Resting when the days were seven—
Then a sound came out of Heaven.

First it smote on mortal ears,
Floating lightly through the spheres,
Near and far from pole to pole—
Then man knew he had a soul.

Finding tongues in every wave
Sea to shore the message gave ;
Mountains, echoing back the strain,
Sent it out to sea again.

High it soared across the blue—
Brighter still the sunshine grew :
Deep it moaned along the ground—
Night itself grew more profound.

Then God pondered as He stood :
' I had said that all was good,
Yet forgot to give man tongue
That my praises might be sung.

‘ Truly this last gift of mine
Blends the mortal with divine ;
Fitley now shall be confessed
All that stirs the human breast.

‘ Maiden’s gladness, lover’s tale,
Dirge of sadness, mourner’s wail,
Grief or joy, whate’er it be,
All that turns man’s heart to me.

‘ I will make my music heard
In the singing of a bird ;
I will strike mankind with awe,
In the mighty tempest’s roar.

‘ Men shall hear my voice and see
Gleams of immortality ;
I will make creation own,
Praise is mine and mine alone.

‘ Heart of all that I create
To my music shall vibrate,
Till man draws his latest breath,
Wrapt in darkness, hushed in death.’

THE POET.

SOMETHING in the souls of men
 Seeks an outlet in the pen ;
 Thoughts that burst from out the heart,
 These have taught the poet's art ;
 Breasts with human passion wrung,
 Needs must find themselves a tongue

Stand beside a lonely shore,
 Listen to the ocean's roar ;
 Hear it underneath the caves,
 Muttering through unending waves,
 Telling of the mysteries hidden
 'Neath its surface tempest-ridden ;
 Loud it wails its mournful fate,
 Mighty, inarticulate.

In the spring-time have you stood
 At the opening of a wood,
 'Mid the cloistered stillness heard
 Untrained carol of a bird ?
 Soaring high or floating soft.
 Still it sends a hymn aloft.
 Phantom bodies frail as dew,
 Darting gleams of lightning hue,

Fill the air with tranquil hum ;
No created life is dumb.

Stand before the ripening corn,
Wait beside a shady lawn,
You shall hear the skylark's trill,
All the world of sunshine fill ;
Earth in noontide slumber lies,
Music rings across the skies.

In the dim cathedral kneel,
Listen to the organ's peal ;
You shall need no tutored ear,
In your secret heart you hear ;
Hark ! your spirit cries aloud,
Heavenward, though your head be bowed.

Stand beside an open grave,
Life gone back to Him Who gave—
See the mourners, sombre, grim ;
Lips are quivering, eyes are dim ;
Each a living harp-string stands,
Played upon by unseen hands.

Ocean's tempest, woodland calm,
Hymn of skylark, minster psalm,
Thrill of life, and dirge of death,
Come of God, Who gave man breath ;

Bidding him in reverence
Owning His Omnipotence,
Fear no shadows, seek the light,
Strain towards the Infinite ;
Deem the inward voice a token
That to him the Lord hath spoken ;
Sounding, when his heart rejoices,
Echoes of the angels' voices ;
Speaking, when life's passions shake him,
Sure that God will not forsake him.
Poetry is one true feature,
That betokens God's own creature.

TWO REVERIES.

I.

If I should die to-night—if suddenly
 'The thing which I call 'I' should cease to be—
 No void were caused on earth : ah me, not mine
 To claim fulfilment of one high design.
 'The sands are out, the little course is run,
 Scarce anything attempted ; nothing done :
 A passing atom 'midst unending hosts,
 A ghost that flitted through a world of ghosts.
 Convention led me, custom made me blind,
 Such puny cares as thrill a puny mind ;
 In mine infirmity ignobly meek,
 Praising base strength, whilst owning I was weak.
 Master of none was I, the slave of all,
 Not bold with stouter minds to risk a fall ;
 Chose not the narrow path, but life's broad road,
 Poor fashion's creature, parasite of mode :
 For rules of conduct ever sore perplexed,
 Made myself laws one day to break them next :
 Bankrupt in purpose, sterile of intent,
 Went for enjoyment where my neighbours went :
 Found pleasure-seeking with disgust was fraught,
 And truest pleasure gained where least 'twas sought.

Not poor in friends, indeed, yet all unblest
In that which only gives life perfect zest.
On kindred warmth the heart inflamed relies,
And passion chilled 'mid dreary ashes dies :
Or worse, unquenched, yet hid, it burns below,
We bear the smart, yet would not let it go.

A vanished bubble in a raging sea,
If I should die to-night and cease to be.

II.

OH, God, inspire me with love
And joy that I was born :
I wait a perfect noon above,
Earth gives a radiant dawn !

The golden light, the quickening dews,
The sweetness of the breeze,
Thy purpose and Thyself infuse,
I see Thee, God, in these.

Each day, each hour, freely give
New blessings from on high ;
In mercy teach me so to live
That I may learn to die !

Alas, no hymns of mine requite
The grace vouchsafed to me—
This were my latest word to-night
If I should 'cease to be.'

A DREAM.

I DREAMT that at the Judgment Day,
 When time and earth had passed away,
 The souls set free from mortal clay
 Stood ranged before the Throne :
 Thereat the Dead their cerements burst,
 The Blest still mingling with the Curst,
 And all in quaking hearts rehearsed
 The evils they had done.

I thought I stood in awed amaze,
 Not daring to uplift my gaze,
 To where, 'midst holiest hymns of praise,
 Christ stood at God's right hand.
 Then spake God's voice both calm and deep,
 'What can ye say, ye wandering sheep,
 Who did not my commandments keep,
 Can ye my wrath withstand ?'

Thereat to Christ I raised my eyes ;
 'On Thee, oh Lord, my soul relies :
 Full mindful of my frailties
 I put my trust in Thee.'
 Thus I : then God, in voice less stern :
 'Well said : my truth thou didst discern ;
 Poor sinners who in heart did turn
 To Christ, shall pardoned be.'

A DREAM.

LAST night I dreamt that I was dead :
 Some few who stood around my bed,
 When they perceived that life had fled,
 Shed unavailing tears :
 I dreamt my spirit trembling stayed,
 And I, bereft of mortal aid,
 Could not but contemplate dismayed
 My tale of wasted years.

Until one knelt and breathed a prayer ;
 I felt it pass me through the air ;
 It rose to heaven—entered there—
 Then spake a voice to me :
 ‘Oh, not for any worth of thine,
 But since all judgment shall be mine,
 And selfless love I count divine,
 Thou too shalt pardoned be.’

Loud rang the proud exultant note,
 Through earth and sky to realms remote
 The bless’d evangel seemed to float,
 ‘Thou too shalt pardoned be !’—
 Glad tidings these, could we be told,
 That though our sins be manifold,
 The loving prayers of those who hold
 Us dear can set us free.

ST. JOHN DICK CUNYNGHAM.

AGED 10, DROWNED WHILST RESCUING A FRIEND, SEPT. 1897.

‘ His grave looks towards the sea where he fought and won his last
battle.’—(*Letter from Colonel Dick Cunyngham, V.C.*)

‘ His grave looks out towards the sea
Which slew, yet gave him victory ;’
So wrote the father—worthy he

A hero’s tale to tell :
Ah, boyish strength too sorely tried !
He saw his playmate in the tide,
Flinched not, but battled to his side ;
Saved him ; and greatly fell.

‘ Towards the sea ’—lie there, and sleep ;
Not yours to hear the nations weep ;
The hurrying highways of the deep
It was not yours to tread ;
Yet yours shall be the twofold crown,
Who won a hero’s high renown,
And, free from worldly stain, lay down
Among the blameless dead.

‘ Towards the sea ’—’twere fitting grave
For one who gave his life to save
A comrade, sinking ’neath the wave :
Then unto all who roam

Wide seas, a constant beacon stand !
And after—in a far-off Land,
Oh, draw us on ; hold out your hand ;
And bid us welcome home.

COUNTESS OF LATHOM.

FATALLY INJURED NOVEMBER 23, 1897.

WE know full well the Preacher saith,
' In 'midst of life we are in death.'

And we confess it true :

Yet which of us is wont to say,

' Me too death follows day by day ;

I may be taken too ' ?

No warning note : how should we fear ?

Unscathed, unthreatened, year by year

We watch the seasons pass :

Though others fall, secure we stand,

Nor heed how with unresting hand

The Mower mows the grass.

Oh, lady, gracious, constant, kind,

Where 'mid the shadows can we find

One cheering ray of light ?

' In 'midst of life we are in death '—

A home lies shattered at a breath,

And day is turned to night.

Yet, ah, forget not, ye who weep,
The loved departed do but sleep ;
 Though gone beyond our ken,
They wait for those who held them dear,
Hereafter, in a gladder sphere,
 To meet, nor part again.

C. W.

DIED 1896.

THE cynics say that never yet
Man passed, and passing left a trace
So deep that time could not efface
His memory, nor friends forget.

Ah yes, we know that time can make
Our burdens lighter, ease our pain,
And win us back to smiles again,
Ev'n though our hearts have seemed to break.

Some griefs there are that bow the head
So low that, if time raised us not,
In very dust would be our lot,
Our manhood gone, our reason fled.

Two years ago, oh well beloved,
Two years ago you passed away ;
Of you shall be my thoughts to-day,
Since time has my allegiance proved.

Together grew we to be men,
Together found the world was fair,
Together sought our pleasure there,
Together—ah me, not again,

Dear comrade, to the end of time
Shall I the broken past renew,
Not spend a merry day with you,
Not hear with you the midnight chime.

Oh, patient, brave, who bore the taint
Of fatal sickness premature,
Doomed a long anguish to endure,
And suffered without moan or plaint :

Resigned, serene, beneath your yoke,
In dauntless cheer you looked around,
In others' joys your solace found
In weak self-pity never spoke.

And when the bitter day had come,
When last your hand in mine was pressed,
You told me that your life was blessed
Since you had loved your wife and home.

Of what avail is my poor rhyme?
It cannot give me back my friend ;
I cannot to his memory lend
The splendour of a muse sublime.

Yet go, my verse ! For though its worth
Be nothing, since I claim no skill,
No fonder thoughts than mine could thrill
The sweetest singer upon earth.

Enough ! It is enough to know
 Whatever ties be loosed or made,
 My love for you can never fade :—
The world is calling ; and I go.

JULY.

I WANT to hear his voice again ;
I want to hear him say the words ;
He loves me—yes, he told me so :
(We listened to the waking birds,
The Eastern sky was all aglow) :
But thoughts and memories are vain,
I want to hear his voice again.

I want to hear his voice again ;
To feel his hand upon my hand :
The daybreak was so long ago—
And did he truly understand ?
I seem now to have faltered so :
And doubt is such a grievous pain,
I want to hear his voice again.

I want to hear his voice again ;
The winter days are long and drear,
And silence numbs the very heart :
One sound alone to me is dear,
And we, for months must be apart :
Ah, me, I cannot bear the strain,
I want to hear his voice again.

Yet I shall hear his voice again ;
Once more we'll listen to the birds,
Once more we'll watch the growing dawn
And I shall hear him say the words ;
Then shall my night be turned to morn :
And life's rough places shall be plain,
Since I have heard his voice again.

TO A LADY ON HER BIRTHDAY.

ANOTHER to your tale of years !
Well, no more change in you appears
Than in a gem which time endears,
 Adding new value,
Until it seems to have no peers—
 Ev'n so I hail you !

No rarer pearl from depths serene
Was ever drawn than you, I ween ;
Not in the heavens at night is seen
 A purer star,
Of all the host that shines between,
 A near, afar.

Enough of metaphor—to me
No name can dearer, nobler be
Than 'woman'—on you reverently
 Do I bestow it,
Moved by a simple chivalry
 As man, not poet.

And I, if called upon to claim
My title to the roll of fame,
Would ask no nation's loud acclaim,
 Elsewhere I bend
My hopes : here lies my loftiest aim,
 To be your friend !

AT THE PARK GATES.

LOOKING and longing—ah, of what avail
Is it to me, who stands without the pale ;
What profits it that I should feast my eyes,
If my starved heart no comfort pacifies ?

I gaze upon yon stately walls—your home ;
As pilgrim to a sacred shrine I come,
Whose cares be many, and whose hopes be few,
All humble I ; aloof, unbending, you !

Never that door for me is opened wide—
(To reach your heart to me has been denied) ;
Those windows blankly stare me back again—
(So in your eyes, dear, have I peered in vain).

Ah, suffer me a while to linger near ;
Not hoping truly aught to see or hear,
Yet well content, since more I may not dare,
To feel your spirit hovering in the air.

TO A FRIEND.

To woman in our hour of need
 We turn, and not in vain we plead,
 To grateful eyes revealed
 A 'ministering angel' stands ;
 I asked for comfort at your hands,
 You touched me, friend, and healed.

Some pangs no doctor's skill can reach,
 Some arts no written lore can teach ;
 When anguish rends the soul,
 'Tis not in these our succour lies,
 I sought it, lady, in your eyes,
 Rose up, and went forth whole.

Ah, think not if my verse be rude
 I therefore fail in gratitude,
 Not mine the poet's art ;
 With no inspired note it rings,
 Yet none the less be sure it springs
 From where you touched my heart.

SUNSET.

A FLAMING light came out of the west
And shone through the drifting clouds ;
But it passed as the sun went down to rest,
And left them like dead men's shrouds.

Then a silver star came over the lea,
And shone in the sky alone :
Oh, may such a beacon wait for me
When my life's day is done !

Asot, Sept. 4th, 1897.

A WIDE black cloud spreads over the skies,
Like the banner of Night unfurled ;
And a mournful note through the branches sighs
As the moan of a weary world.

But over the hills the sun breaks through
And flickers a parting ray ;
And it may be the Heavens will all be blue
When night has passed away.

Crom, Sept. 15th, 1897.

DARGAI.

‘It is impossible to speak too highly of the gallantry of the Gordon Highlanders in Wednesday’s action, when the Dargai ridge was stormed. At the critical moment, after several unsuccessful attempts had been made to carry the heights, the men were drawn up, and Colonel Mathias, who commanded, addressed them. “Men of the Gordon Highlanders!” he said, “The General says that position must be taken at all costs, The Gordon Highlanders will take it.”

‘This announcement the men received with a ringing cheer, and at the word of command to advance they bounded after their leader. Dashing across the open ground, their officers at their head, they scaled the height and drove the enemy from their position, the 3rd Sikhs and other troops following close behind them.’—*The Times*, Oct. 23rd, 1897.

A SPEECH the faintest heart to thrill
 (The Colonel ’twas that spake it) ;
 ‘The General bids us take that hill ;
 Come, Highlanders, we’ll take it !’

To Indian skies then Scottish cheers
 Went ringing and a-ringing ;
 And Scottish pipes the hill-man hears,
 Sees Scottish tartans swinging.

Charge, Gordon Highlanders, charge on !
 Charmed words the Chief had spoken,
 His line stood through the ‘fire zone,’
 Where more than one had broken.

They won the heights—each soldier's name
Who faced that dread endeavour,
Stands written on the roll of fame,
Indelibly for ever.

Oh, fools that write, and fools that preach,
That England's might is sinking,
Does not this tale some lesson teach,
Will this not set you thinking?

Each heart where blood of Briton runs
To-day with pride is beating,
And sons of ours shall stir their sons,
The legend still repeating.

While Britain rears such sons as these
There's room for small misgiving;
Britannia still shall rule the seas,
And life is still worth living !

SPOILT.

AND so your first season is ended,
The last ball-room candle put out,
And all the great things you intended
Are settled somehow, beyond doubt.

And how has it left you, I wonder ;
Quite changed from the girl of last year ?
It's only four months—rather under,
Yet is this all true that I hear ?

They say with life's glamour you're smitten,
You've greedily swallowed the bait,
Your social confessions, if written,
Were envy, and malice, and hate.

Ah me ! and last year you were talking,
Unscathed in your childish delight,
Of all you would do—we were walking
Just here—where I'm sitting to-night.

And then I had no premonition,
It may be I shrank from the truth,
I put down your social ambition
To innocent gladness of youth.

And now you've no time or attention
For anything outside one set,
Your old friends you've long ceased to mention
And seemingly wish to forget.

I don't underrate for a minute
The spell that society throws,
We all of us like to be 'in it,'
And once you've the feeling, it grows.

It isn't the least detrimental
To have a 'Society' mind,
So long as it seeks what is gentle,
And cherishes what is refined.

But you and your friends have determined
That you are the salt of the earth ;
You needn't be titled and ermined,
It isn't a question of birth ;

Your set's a haphazard connection
Of no defined system or laws,
Who think one another perfection,
And all the rest cyphers and bores.

I know what the world is—you doubt it ?
You see I don't live in it now,
Because I'm quite happy without it ;
It wasn't so once, I allow.

Why, no one had more fun than I did
Before I was put on the shelf,
When love of fair ladies divided
My heart with the love of myself ;

When long after morning had broken
I'd stroll home alone from a house,
Nerve-strung with confessions half-spoken,
And drunk with the music of Strauss.

Yes, truly I drained Pleasure's chalice,
And took all the gifts the Gods sent,
But as for this envy and malice,
I don't think I knew what it meant.

Perhaps to be selfish is human,
We all like to go to the front,
There never was man yet or woman
But wished to be top of the hunt.

But this field's so widely extended
That if you're not left, and don't fall,
You'll find now, I'm sure, as we then did,
There's plenty of room for us all.

Yet if you will always be racing
(Yourself and your few friends apart),
Remember that those you're outpacing
Made way for you, p'raps, at the start :

Remember, too, pace must be reckoned,
You may find it too strong a burst,
And no one likes being ranked second
When once they've been ranked with the first.

Of course you were bound to be altered
In knowledge of life, and the rest,
With that I should never have paltered,
As deeming it all for the best :

But don't go these ways, I implore you,
I know you are all right at heart,
You've still got your whole life before you,
Forget that you've made a false start.

And ah, by the Heaven above you,
Don't show that you hold me less dear :
You never shall learn that I love you—
If so you'd have guessed it last year.

A BALL-ROOM.

A WELL-LIT room, a perfect floor,
A dozen dancers, never more,
No undue crowding round the door,
 Strauss tunes to dance to,
Cool balconies, and ice galore
 Amongst the plants too.

A little lady in her teens,
Who's playing still life's opening scenes,
And naïvely wonders what it means
 When her heart flutters,
As if deep meaning each word screens
 Which *someone* utters.

A youth who loves, but does not dare,
Dancing, it may be, in a square,
Finds, when he clasps hands with his fair,
 That her hand lingers
In his, and strips away despair
 With tell-tale fingers.

A chaperone who—bless her heart !—
Regards the whole thing as a mart,
Likes her child's partners to be ' smart '
 (Word most mysterious),
And takes a duke, earl, baron, bart.,
 None else as serious.

On speaking terms with all the town,
Knows everybody's every gown,
Debrett and Burke too upside down,
 And will not fail you
In marking with her smile or frown
 Your social value.

Young men, well-dressed and debonair,
Who seem content to stand and stare,
Until they think it time to pair ;
 Downstairs they've stolen,
To seek the supper-room and there
 Eat an ortolan.

Another ; not less greedy he,
But ah, not soothed so easily !
Whom all his friends regret to see
 Daily grow thinner,
Though every night he's known to be
 Asked out to dinner.

No tempting dish, no wine, I wis,
Could stay those gnawing pangs of his,
No artifice on earth there is
His flame to smother,
Who loves a lady and knows this—
She loves another.

And here's one who has been well known
To every hostess in the town
For thirty years—he's said to own
Four sons past twenty,
But still loves dancing—though he's sown
Wild oats in plenty.

Some ladies—just a few—who hate
To sit up every night so late,
And with disfavour contemplate
How modern dancers,
Avoiding everything sedate,
Love 'kitchen lancers.'

The first light in the eastern sky,
Up from the street the Linkman's cry—
Seizing the hours as they fly,
Discretion scorning,
Let's live to-night—what if we die
To-morrow morning?

For if our sense of youth we lose,
And fling away our dancing shoes,
The lights soon fade ; 'mid sombre hues

Joy seems a phantom,
Which weary man in vain pursues,

Mutatus quantum !

TO A LADY, WHO SAID THAT SHE WAS
‘ PERFECTLY CONTENTED.’

IN Stevenson these words I found—
 (Their justice I confess)—
‘ If we are happy, all around
 We radiate happiness.’

Not happiest always those whose case
 Is that for which we long :
Not always to the swift the race,
 Nor battle to the strong.

True happiness exists, we know,
 But not in worldly things ;
It is a grace the Gods bestow
 And in ourselves it springs.

The good Gods we should praise, I wis,
 For blessings they have sent ;
And truly I give thanks for this,
 That you are well content.

For your sake, friend, my prayers were due
 That you should happy be ;
And that glad light which burns in you,
 Reflected, shines on me.

Then, lady, go your gracious way,
Your destiny fulfil ;
Whilst earth holds such as you I say
‘ Life is worth living still.’

VOID.

I SAID my heart was broken
Three years ago,
When your last word was spoken,
That fatal 'no.'

And now you see 'tis mended—
Don't look annoyed ;
It beats, yes, as it then did,
But, dear, 'tis void.

The pieces that lay shattered,
Are knit quite fair,
But passion, as they scattered,
Fled—you know where !

TO AN AMATEUR ACTRESS.

NOT seldom, lady, have we met, each with allotted part,
To 'take the boards,' a trifle I, you mistress of your art ;
And off the stage 'tis now lang syne that, spite of 'waits'
 between,
We've found Life's drama gives the cue for many a pleasant
 scene.

Upon the stage the good and kind is your accustomed rôle,
In private life you—space forbids your virtues to extol !
I have no wit for epigram, yet be my homage this—
Neither in drama nor in life you ever act amiss.

AN EPISODE.

Now we : one another, ourselves, are we hurting ?
What is the position ? I really don't know :
Do I love you ? not truly : I hate the word 'flirting,'
And yet, dear, I own I don't want you to go.

Do you love me ? I think not : I hope not : believe me
I shrink from the thought it might end in your pain :
Yet just for this summer, smile on, and deceive me ;
I'm not quite a brute, but I fear I am vain.

Then, let us part friends ; see the episode's ended :
Years hence we will talk of the days that have been :
We'll say it was time that the curtain descended ;
But—yes, we'll admit—'twas a pretty love scene !

WRITTEN FOR THE MUSIC OF E. H. A.

THE skies are drear ; the gale is loud
 Across the stormy main ;
 The mast before its rage is bowed,
 My heart is bowed in pain ;
 For I must go away and roam
 In lands beyond the sea,
 And I have left a maid at home
 Who gave her heart to me.

Though I should go the wide world round
 And many maids be fair,
 There's ne'er a maiden shall be found
 That can with her compare ;
 And I will never be afraid
 Of her inconstancy,
 Where'er I go she's still the maid
 Who gave her heart to me.

And I'll come back when skies are blue
 And birds are all in tune,
 When maidens' vows are sweet and true
 And all the world is June ;
 Then we will set old cares aside
 In love and laughter free,
 And I will make the maid my bride
 Who gave her heart to me.

TO A LADY, WITH SOME FLOWERS.

LAST night, or this morning, 'twas just about dawn ;
You said, ' Here's the day upon which I was born ;'
It struck me at once that the whole British Nation
Should be in convulsions of congratulation.

July twenty-first, eighteen seventy-nine,
Should always be starred and marked red underline,
As being one instance on which Fortune's smile
Illumined the woes of the Emerald Isle.

I venture, dear lady, to lay at your feet
These blossoms, as deeming them fresh, fair, and sweet,
And so not unworthy, if aught upon earth,
Be worthy of you on the day of your birth.

Accept then, I beg you, the gift that I send ;
'Tis humble, but I am your most humble friend,
And humblest of all is this effort at verse,
'The sentiment's poor, and the poetry's worse !

TO A LADY, WITH A BOOK OF MY POEMS.

You asked me to send you my poems ; I send them,
And unto your friendly indulgence commend them,
I don't pretend any great praise is their due,
But most are quite short, and at least they are few.

Hitherto we've conversed in a frivolous vein,
I beg that you won't let that happen again,
It may be a low plane my friends put my verse on,
But most of them grant I'm a serious person.

You may not know yet, though I hope you may soon,
'That really I'm not just a ball-room buffoon ;
Unhappily most of one's partners get vexed,
If one airs one's views on this life and the next.

You're off to relax your Belgravian demeanour
'Midst torrents and pine woods around Pontresina,
Perhaps if we met there we'd find that our ball talk,
Gave way to a style of discourse less like small talk.

Good-bye, then, and pray let the lapse of a year
Bring no other change when we meet again here ;
Let mine be this new conversational movement—
Dear lady, in you there's no room for improvement.

WRITTEN IN A COPY OF 'FELIX DORRIEN,'
SENT TO MRS. CYRIL MAUDE.

To 'Rosamund,' my 'Rosamund,' I send ;
You gave the name ; could you your genius lend,
My writing, like your acting, were exempt
From fault—and honour mine ; not cold contempt.

TO COLONEL HENRY DYER, WITH A COPY
OF MY POEMS.

My dedication says, you'll see,
'The verse is mine, the verse is me ;'
And I believe it true ;
My inmost self lies stript and bare
In this small book, and yet I dare
To give it, friend, to you.

For though each page is strewn with faults,
And no great thought my style exalts,
Yet I'll not be afraid ;
You've ever turned a friendly eye
On me, though imperfections lie
As thick upon my head.

CHRISTMAS, 1897.

ON A CHRISTMAS CARD SENT TO MY MOTHER.

You see this church ? If I were there
I'd kneel and offer up a prayer
On Christmas Day for thee ;
Then at this Inn I'd go and dine,
And pledge in my first glass of wine
' My mother over-sea ! '

TO MY NIECE, CECILY FRYER ; WITH 'AN ALMANAC OF TWELVE SPORTS.'

My dear God-daughter, I send you this book,
It's full of fine things, as you'll see if you look,
Beautiful pictures and elegant rhymes,
Various sports fit for various times.

I hope that you'll have in the new coming year
Larks, like these ladies and gentlemen here,
Freedom from all disagreeable concerns,
And of Christmas a great many happy returns.

IN A BOOK GIVEN TO A FRIEND.

I WISH you joy and health,
Fame, fortune, power, wealth,
Success attend on everything you do ;
And may you tread life's stage
To hale and green old age,
And here's a merry Christmas, friend, to you.

Fœminarum genus est mari simile, quod in horas
mutatur, eandem per sæcnla præbet speciem.

All womankind are like the sea ;
Of many moods ; yet needs must be
Of one type everlastingly.

Emori nolo, sed me esse mortuum nihil curo.—*Cicero.*

Death's laying on of hands I dread,
Yet have no fear of being dead.

ON A SILVER BOX GIVEN TO A LADY UPON
COMING OF AGE.

‘ OF age,’ you say—an empty phrase,
Another of ‘ the Law’s delays ;’
What, all this time to recognise you,
We long ago learnt how to prize you !

AN APOLOGY FOR MY POETRY.

BELIEVE me, ’tis a Destiny
I’m called on to fulfil ;
I write my verse because I *must*,
And not because I *will*.

QU’EST CE QUE L’AMOUR ?

WHAT’S love? A power to curse or bless,
A crux in man’s life set,
Where two extremes—unhappiness
And happiness—have met.

‘STANZAS WRITTEN IN DEJECTION NEAR
NAPLES.’—*Vide* SHELLEY.

THE angry sea is flecked with foam,
An angry squall rides up the sky,
And angry that I left my home
Am I.

Depression deep beyond control
Has seized on my disordered mind ;
I groan, within my cabin hole
Confined.

Oh, warned by sufferings of yore,
Why did I ever come to sea ?
I might have known the fate in store
For me.

Shield me, ye Gods, this trouble through,
I'll never tempt your wrath again
By rash emprise ; or if I do,
Why then —— !

THE LEGEND OF THE PIRATES OF CROM.

HON. A. CR—CHT—N.

HON. G. M—LLS.

F. F—RQ—H—R, Esq. (C—m G—ds).

THREE pirates gay Set out one day
 To see what adventures might fall in their way
 In the course of a cruise in and out of Crom Bay.
 Ere going afloat, They put to the vote
 As to which of the three should take charge of the boat,
 And hoist—just to show he commanded—his coat ;
 For be it confessed They'd never possessed
 Such a thing as a flag, so they had to divest
 Themselves of the garments in which they were dressed,
 (Only coats—for though void both of honour and piety
 They seldom, if ever, offended propriety,
 And under their moral code shameful to them it is
 Not to be clothed in their lower extremities).
 They had then to brag No such thing as a flag
 When they put out to sea and went cruising for swag.
 But as bold as brass With an eye in his glass,
 I mean the other way round, (alas !
 I'd started this rhyme Before I had time
 To see it was wrong—but I don't care a dime)
 I say as bold As heroes of old
 Was Artful Arthur, who up and told

His mates the views he inclined to hold.
 'Golumptious Greg, Attend I beg,
 It strikes me you want taking down a peg.'
 (With that he nodded and slapped his leg),
 'And sure as ever an egg's an egg,
 If you are not careful I'll take that keg
 Of powder there, There's lots to spare,
 And make you sit on it like a chair
 And send you flying up into the air.
 Now, you be quiet, And don't you fly at
 Too high a game. Ah! I see you shy at
 The risk; yes, your age is a young one to die at.'
 Now no man can he Hear such uncanny
 Remarks made, unless they are in Hindoostani—
 (A lingo which makes Frenchmen say 'non compranny')
 And not wish to hide in some corner or cranny;
 And such was the case with the brigand named Fanny;
 Whose nature and deeds were so truly atrocious
 He'd earned for himself the nickname of 'Ferocious.'
 For once his audacity failed, and with heart full
 Of terror, he turned his quid, saying, 'Oh, Artful,
 I say without The slightest doubt
 Your Godpa knew what he was about
 When he gave you that name: for you mayn't be stout,
 That's to say you ain't built like a lubberly lout,
 But I declare For *savoir faire*
 Your equal ain't to be found anywhere.
 Now old Golumptious May be bumptious
 And true his looks ain't no ways scrumptious;

But there he'll stand, With his brass stump-hand
A noble sight when we comes to land,
For there ain't no mortal under the sun
When he sees old Greg, but'll cut and run.
{Greg gave a hitch Fore and aft his breech,
His left eye too gave a violent twitch ;
He might have been seized with a sudden itch
Or else he winked, meaning ' I'm just sich')—
Then on went Fan, ' Now here's my plan
If you can improve on it—well you can,
Let's put out to sea And we'll agree
To serve you true and faithfully,
And more indeed. If we succeed
The whole of the credit to you we'll concede ;
Who knows to what this cruise may lead ?
Why you may get A title yet,
An Admiral with epaulette
If such promotion's etiquette,
Or higher ; perhaps in the Order of Bath Her
Majesty won't mind including Sir Arthur ;
But if we fail Then mark me well,
You won't come so very well out of this sail :
Me and my mate We'll compensate
Ourselves, if it turns out unfortunate
On you, and *mon ami*, we'll *couper* your *tête*.'
Says Arthur, ' Right, That suits me quite
And that's the spirit in which to fight.
But don't forget, When sail's once set
That I'm your skipper, and you may bet,

(I warn you friendly, 't isn't a threat)
As such I never would scruple to shoot any
Man of my crew if, ennuied with ship's routine, he
Showed me the slightest intention to mutiny.'
To cut short the story First Fan then Greg swore he
Would follow his Captain to death or to glory.
Up sail, and away They are out in Crom Bay,
Golumptious Greg shouting 'Avast' and 'belay !'
And down his throttle He empties a bottle
Of rum, which makes all of his face very mottle ;
He shouts a bit thicker, and louder and quicker,
But otherwise don't seem the worse for the liquor.
Until he gets cursed up and down by the skipper
Who'd given the order to pull up the dipper ;
And being no longer quite clear in the head
As grave as the Pope He loosed the wrong rope
And down came the mainsail amidships instead.
But bar the curses Greg none the worse is
Inflamed by the thought of slit throats and full purses,
(He'll put by the former without need of hearses
The latter—he'll thank fate for all its great mercies).

Now Arthur was, as we have said,
The bravest man afloat,
And that his vessel bore instead
Of flag, brave Arthur's coat.

Thus it befell that as he sat,
With hand upon the tiller,

He felt (not being very fat)
First chill, then rather chiller.

In fact his enterprising soul
Began to halt and waver,
He thought he'd abdicate control
In Greg's or Fanny's favour.

But whilst he sat perplexed with doubt
A-sneezing and a-coughing,
Ferocious Fanny shouted out,
'Two sail, sir, in the offing.'

The moment passed The die was cast,
He nailed his coat (that's his flag) to the mast
Gave his belt a pull just to make all fast
Whilst Greg kept shouting 'Avast, avast !'
I much deplore To add he swore
The number of vessels were certainly four ;
Thanks to the rum and his natural thick wit he
Suffered severely from mental obliquity.

The Captain spake, 'Ferocious, take
That brute and give him a sobering shake,
Then see who it is that's afloat on the Lake.'
Ferocious dealt A mighty welt
On the part which Golumptious exposed as he knelt

(Which, to judge by his roaring, he sensibly felt),
 Then up and spied And loudly cried
 ' On the oath of a pirate who never lied
 It's the "Squall" and the "Meteor" both out on the tide.'

The Captain struck His thigh, ' My buck
 The devil's in it, or we're in luck,
 Clear decks, clear decks, We'll pay respects
 To the Lord who dresses in Horseguard's checks ;
 And it's on the cards The Coldstream Guards
 Will fall in short in their barrack yards,
 For we'll pay Mr. George, too, our kind regards ;
 Both him and his brother We'll jolly well smother
 With powder until very likely their mother
 Won't recognise one of the two from the t'other :
 So shove old Golumptious up under the seat here
 Then run out your gun and go straight for the " Meteor."'

Of mariners
 The bard avers
 In legend *semper virens*
 That often they
 Were lured away
 By captivating sirens.

Men can't preserve
 A tranquil nerve,
 Unless he's more than human
 Ashore, afloat,
 At face, or note
 Of fascinating woman.

The yachts came near,
And then quite clear,
The Pirates saw inside them,
A group so rare
Of ladies fair,
Their hands fell limp beside them.

Each pirate's heart
With violent start,
Expanded into rapture
They'd take the lot,
They swore—if not
They'd risk defeat and capture.

Ferocious Fan Was the deuce of a man
With ladies—indeed he was under the ban
With husbands who loved their wives—so the tale ran—
He gave a wink Which would make one shrink
If one was a woman with nerves, and think
One had come pretty near to destruction's brink.
Brave Arthur stands And his eye expands
As if he were Monarch of many wide lands ;
(Golumptious lies grinning and kissing both hands.)

Now ere they got Off a single shot
(I don't know if they were demented or not,
But the Pirates, it seems, had completely forgot
Their only one chance lay in making things hot

As quick as they could one by one for each yacht),
But as their boat came In range of them,
The 'Squall's' skipper bringing his bows right athwart her,
Deluged the crew with a bucket of water.

Then Arthur pished And Fanny wished
The cruise *in prospectu* had early been 'dished,'
And Arthur swore He'd never more
Be skipper unless his best oilskins he wore.
Greg lay like lumber And snored in his slumber—
Indeed to their project it must have been some bar
That he was so early put quite *hors de combat*.

Away from the scene Sailed the yachts serene,
Leaving the Pirates uncommonly green ;
And as to their bargain and what result came of it,
As to its failure, and who took the blame of it,
Well, history hasn't recorded the fame of it.

Perhaps we shan't quarrel If I say the moral
Of what I have written is this, that before all,
If out of a battle, you'd bear off the laurel,
Don't risk any nervous or mental distraction,
From rum or fair ladies, before joining action ;
And if you're defending, invoke (that's between us)
The gracious support of the daughters of Venus.

Crom, September, 1897.

THE LEGEND OF THE LADIES' BATTLE.

THE Countess fair Was made aware
 That Baron Montrichard was laying a snare
 To catch a young man who was under her care :
 In Bonaparte plots he had taken a share—
 The boy was a fool to be *dans cette galère* :
 For the King of France Looked much askance
 At such folks and lead them the deuce of a dance ;
 And no one with personal ends to advance
 Was wise to display in his tone or demeanour
 Regret for Old Boney in far St. Helena.
 The name of the fool Was de Flavigneul ;
 He'd been in his boyhood to many a school
 Abroad, which makes young men discreet, as a rule,
 But really I'm certain That Sandford and Merton
 Or any engaging young lady from Girton,
 Or an Eton boy who never had 'sapped,'
 Or even a child young enough to be slapped,
 Were not more apt To go and get trapped
 Than this travelled student condemned to be clapped
 Into prison, and there have his vertebrium snapped.

The Countess chose ; (Why, no one knows :
 To furnish a plot for this play, I suppose,

Or else from caprice ;) To take in her niece,
 (A heroine's needed for every piece)
 As boarder (un-paying) on permanent lease :
 And she thought it wise The youth's disguise
 Should be paraded before her eyes ;
 If you'd been expecting old Montrichard's visit you'd
 Also have felt an unusual solicitude,
 Knowing that when there are too many 'in it'
 A secret is never quite safe for a minute.

Now though she thought The youth was nought
 But a *valet-de-chambre*, whom she'd always been taught
 Was a person whose love could not fitly be sought
 By any one who'd been presented at Court,
 'Twere vain to deny She'd cast an eye
 Of very great favour on him on the sly ;
 And (what made the matter more truly distressing)
 The Countess herself (there's no harm in confessing)
 Was in love with him, too, when she'd no means of guessing
 She'd got in her niece such a 'well-disguised blessing,'
 Since the latter had found his looks so prepossessing
 She'd fallen in love with him past all redressing.
 Now it befell That mademoiselle
 Went out riding, and sad to tell
 Her untamed colt Proceeded to bolt
 And out of the saddle the lady to jolt,
 Sent her flying
 On to her head,
 And left her lying
 As if she were dead.

The refugee Came speedily
 And cried aloud, 'Oh, Leonie !'
 (The lady's name ; Perhaps you'll blame
 My carelessness since I've not mentioned the same :
 The fact is as yet I've not really had time to ;
 Moreover it's rather a hard one to rhyme to).
 Well, when he found Her on the ground
 Stretched in a kind of death-like swoond
 His agitation was most profound :
 'Oh, Leonie,' repeated he,
 I'm not the man I seem to be :
 Which accounts for the fact that my manners are free,
 But heroes in drama are often like me
 Reduced to strange courses of mystery.
 Now on my knee Beneath this tree
 To you my identity I'll discover
 I'm really the regular true stage-lover.
 As soon as he spoke The lady woke ;
 At first she thought it was only his joke ;
 Perceiving it wasn't, the silence broke
 With a sigh which stage-lovers are sure to evoke,
 A prompt interchange of some elegant phrases,
 Much clasping of hands and some rapturous gazes,
 Which the rule with stage-lovers and all their stage-ways is.
 I'm afraid I can't Pretend the Aunt
 Was pleased with the turn of events, so I shan't
 Dwell longer on this—Let's proceed *en avant* !
 It was during a ball In the servant's hall
 That Baron Montrichard elected to call

With a troop of dragoons, all stalwart and tall.
The Countess was quick As the ancient Nick ;
In less than a minute she'd hit on a trick,
A subtle device to take the old rascal in,
One not unworthy of Cooke or of Maskelyne.
She turned to her friend De Grignon, ' Lend
Your aid, sir, I beg ; for I've got to contend
With a man who spares no-one in seeking his end.'
De Grignon replied with the utmost agility :
No service he'd shirk if she happened to will it, he
Had the misfortune In vain to importune
The lady for love, but her heart was, he thought, hewn
Of some cold hard substance like stone or like marble
Which forced him to moan and to sigh ' Oh, Diable !'
Now being her guest She bade him divest
Himself of his garments and quickly get dressed
In de Flavigneul's livery, breeches and vest,
And then in his stead wait the Baron's arrest.
' Dear Countess, for you I will plunge, swim, or sink,' cries he;
Courage with him was an idiosyncrasy :
His mother was brave as a Stanley or Howard is,
His father was principally famed for his cowardice ;
They both long ago had departed to Heaven,
Bequeathing to him an unduly large leaven
Of instinct paternal conducive to pallor
Of face—call it ' funk,' or the ' best part of valour.'

The Baron fell slap Into the trap
Never supposing he'd got the wrong chap,

And arrested De Grignon before you'd say 'snap' !
 In fact, for the moment his zeal was so fervent,
 That thinking the Countess unjust to a servant,
 Without of the consequence having a presage,
 He bribed him himself to go off with a message :
 ' To horse, to horse, Let's have no loss
 Of time ; I'll give you a pass of course,
 My chief's in command of the neighbouring force,
 Tell him in detection I've proved such an artist,
 Already I've captured this young Bonapartist.'

As soon as he'd quitted The Baron was twitted
 With having the commonest cautions omitted ;
 At his own instigation his victim had flitted !
 The Baron, no wonder Went raving like thunder
 Consigning them all to a place—somewhere under
 Our feet—whither fell the first angel of blunder :
 But whilst not denying he'd put his foot in it, he
 Swore that before he'd left the vicinity,
 By hook or crook He'd bring to book
 The youth who had made him ridiculous look.
 Meanwhile the youth had scarcely taken
 A dozen steps before he was shaken
 With certain misgivings for having forsaken
 The gallant De Grignon to ' save his own bacon,'
 And back he stept To intercept
 The course of injustice—(the Don yclept
 Quixote of La Mancha, the doleful of visage,
 Would like to know chivalry thrives still in this age) ;

He said, ' My dear Countess, I know no amount is
Enough to repay the full scope of your bounties,
Yet give me, pray, Your leave to stay
Until this all ends in a regular way :
My dear Grignon, You shan't demean your n—
Ame in my cause, and the gulf which you've seen yawn,
Shall swiftly close, I'll face my foes,
To you I'm most grateful, as you may suppose.'

But long ere the Baron had had time to profit
Of this gallant conduct (he'd not yet heard of it
But continued to hold sorrow's cup and to quaff it)
A message came In the King's own name,
Or the name of the Council—it's really the same—
To say the free pardon so long advocated
By the Baron himself had arrived, though belated.
Well, here was news : He could not choose,
But own himself tricked by the Countess's ruse,
But being inclined To ease of mind,
Not sorry escape from his troubles to find,
He wisely decided to put a good face on it,
Foreseeing a moment of joy, he would hasten it ;
With little delay He said his say ;
The lovers began making love straight away :
The Countess 'tis true, didn't look very gay,
The Baron's announcement Meant her renouncement
Of love which was real, whatever her bounce meant.

I've heard women called such rude names as ' queer cattle,'
But ladies are bad 'uns to beat in a battle :

They may be queer But they know not fear.
Their fancy's quick, and their reason clear.
They're not so selfish as men—not near,
That's why to all right-minded people they're dear.
And so in this instance the Countess we've found
Has managed to make things quite pleasant all round.
Already too long this effusion of mine is—
The play is concluded ; so I'll conclude—*Finis !*

Thetford, October, 1897.

THE LEGEND OF THE FROZEN
MOTHER-IN-LAW.

ONCE in a town Of no renown
(The author omitted to put the name down),
There used to be A family
A father, a mother, a daughter—these three ;
I don't see my way I regret to say,
To tell you their name in the orthodox way,
For it's rather hard On a dog'rel bard,
Unless he is willing all sense to discard,
And use a conjunction that's quite absurd,
To rhyme a word That never occurred
In any known sentence that ever was heard.
Down on this page I can easily jot 'Muff,'
But that doesn't give me a fair rhyme to 'Watmuff :'
Of rhymes like 'snuff' And 'stuff' and 'puff,'
And other one-syllable words I've enough ;
But until the heights of Parnassus you've climbed to
You'll find the whole name isn't one to be rhymed to ;
It's easy enough to fit in when divided ;
Otherwise, 'ere you fix it, you'll be pretty nigh dead.

The daughter was wooed by a youth named Walter,
With whom she was anxious to step to the altar,

And if with his love she had threatened to palter
 He'd have moaned like a Guardsman exiled to Gibraltar.
 Her father said 'Yes,' But none the less
 The lovers were stranded in deep distress,
 In fact they were left in the deuce of a mess ;
 'Twas all very well for the father to bless,
 In a way his consent it was well to possess,
 But the laws of the house were laid down by another,
 When *she* spoke, their wishes they all had to smother,
 As best they might : For wrong or right
 Before her her husband could only 'sit tight,'
 And when in opinion there came a diversity
She gave the law ; *he* daren't try to reverse it, he
 Sensibly felt, That if one dwelt
 In any place more circumscribed than the Veldt
 With such a companion from day to day,
 One's sole chance of peace was to smile—and give way.

But Walter had plighted his troth to dear Emily,
 And all of us know of this line, 'verbum semel e-
 Missum volat' (Latin) 'irrevocabile ;'
 'Mongst cultured Britons or 'mongst wild Matabele,
 Dark men or blond, A word is a bond,
 Most binding of all on a lover who's fond.
 And so he swore That long before
 The pang of a broken engagement he bore
 He'd actually make her—his Mother-in-Law !

So ran the drift Of life, no rift
 Appeared in the clouds, not a sign that they'd lift

When all of a sudden came Ferdinand Swift,
A nephew of Watmuff; quite young; yet he'd spent years
Seeking success in American ventures :
A cheerful youth, And one in sooth
Who hadn't a rigid regard for the truth.
It seems the Fates Out in the States
Had brought him in touch with the oddest of mates,
Who wasted no time in plain diggin' and delvin',
But made great discoveries like our Lord Kelvin :
He'd turned to science, And by-and-by hence
Had learned to set physical laws at defiance
By means of a simple and colourless fluid,
An unknown brew, id Est no Druid
Or ancient alchymist, or mystic magician,
Aspired to such in his wildest ambition.
His first intent Was only meant
To deal with such meat as to Europe was sent,
Where he thought he could make the economy greater
By freezing alive than by refrigerator.
If you contrive To freeze alive
Your beasts, and unfreeze them where'er they arrive,
So that the meat Is fresh and sweet,
Why surely you've hit on a cunning conceit !
And if you rekindle the animal heat
No doubt you can say your success is complete.
Now Swift had got A little plot
(Perhaps it was moral, perhaps it was not)
To strike on the iron just when it was hot :

He vowed that his friend was so full of good nature
He wouldn't object if Swift came to tempt Fate here.
He'd risked no denial, Put up a small phial
Of each fluid ; then come to give them a trial.
'Two birds in the bush are not worth one bird in hand,'
That was the theory of life with our Ferdinand :
'I'll see if I Cannot apply
This excellent system to humanity.
It's one that most people would willingly try,
Supposing finances were going awry,
Or otherwise people were left high and dry,
No longer their only resource were to die ;
They'd freeze ; and rekindle again by-and-by.'
But he couldn't persuade Man, matron, or maid,
To have on themselves this experiment made ;
Of being left frozen they all were afraid.
Old Watmuff at once saw a chance of a respite
(We've seen that he bore t'ards his wife more or less spite):
'It's just this way : I grieve to say
Your dear aunt is suffering every day
From dreadful neuralgia : now if you display
Your fluid, and vow it would take it away,
She's yours—If you want my consent : well, you may !'

When men colleague
To hatch intrigue
'Tis well to keep an eye
On those who hear,
Because it's clear
One may turn out a spy.

Thus Walter heard :
He spoke no word,
But straight to Madam went,
And quick revealed
What lay concealed
Beneath their fair intent.

‘ Our course is clear,
The phial’s here,
I saw him put it down ’—
Oh woe betide !
Watmuff had died.
Could he have seen that frown.

Without delay
She poured away
The stuff and put in water :
‘ And now, young man,’
She said, ‘ you can
Aspire to my daughter.’

Watmuff returned : His spirit burned,
(Not knowing of course what his missis has learned),
To try the experiment quickly : he yearned
For the key of the place where his wine was interned,
Which she’d taken away On their wedding day
To put all temptation far out of his way
And cure him (she said) of his vice, of his *Kako*—
Ethes bibendi, and love of tobacco.

The rogues who'd connived In this plot, then arrived,
Old Watmuff who hoped to be *pro tem.* unwived,
And Swift by whom she should be froze, then revived.
The lady gave way : ' My spouse I obey ' :
Though it seemed little less than an *auto da fé* :
She made pretence Of losing sense :
Their satisfaction was most intense :
Watmuff seized her bag and extracted thence
The key of the cellar : then lit an Havanna
And smoked in her face in a dissolute manner.
The body they carefully hid in a cupboard,
A semi-defunct up-to-date Mrs. Hubbard,
Then hastened away to the favourite bin
Intent to indulge in that time-honoured sin,
Of which Knight Templars Were once exemplars—
A course of proceeding which might bring remorse on
Some folks ; besides shocking Sir Wilfrid Lawson.
Down they sat, and began to become in their drink witty
Never suspecting the awful propinquity
Of open ears : ' Midst jibes and jeers
The bottle of '34 port disappears,
Till Swift perceiving His uncle leaving
The strict path of prudence says, ' You're much relieving
My mind : your talk puts me much at my ease ;
It's quite on the cards that my aunt won't unfreeze :
Remember, I did this with your consent, please :
Inventors are all prone to failures like these.'
Watmuff aghast Says, ' That's my last

Glass of port ; my desire for freedom is past :
Supposing this " corporis rigor " should last,
They'd hang me for murder
Just think, if I heard her
Gird at me now (she was always a girder)
I'd really be glad—nothing could seem absurder !'

Ferdinand, thinking he'd gone far enough,
Proceeded to look for his unfreezing stuff.
He saw the old man's grief : did not wish to mock it :
But found that the bottle was not in his pocket !
He cried, ' Don't groan : My fault, I own,
Just keep your eye on her until I have flown
To my hotel : All may be well ;
The bottle may be there for all I can tell ;
If not, to restore the degree atmospheric her
Body requires I'll fly to America.'
Watmuff was distraught ; Never man was distraughter,
And vowed he would throw her forthwith in hot water.

Now Walter was a crafty lad ;
He made a little plan ;
He meant to show them that they had
In him a good young man.

Oh, fair was Emily and good,
No mortal could resist her,
And angels always wished they could
In their serene host '*List 'er.*

They sat before the cupboard door,
As if unconsciously,
And told (quite loud) how nevermore
They'd flout Mama's decree.

And so they gained the longed-for end
For which they had despaired,
And her, whom Love had failed to bend,
Diplomacy had 'squared.'

Then out the dame Exulting came
Intending to put Mr. Watmuff to shame ;
Back he came, with two large cans both well on the boil
To find to his horror that vain was his toil ;
(What a theme for a sketch by the late Richard Doyle !)
He wished he could slip off his own mortal coil,
'Twas all troubled water, his life, and no oil.

Then into the room Disturbing the gloom
Burst Ferdinand Swift whom he'd trusted, and whom
He now thought had sent him post haste to his doom.
'It's right enough, I've found the stuff
Come, into her ear we'll inject *quantum suff.*'
He cried : of the truth of course he'd not dreamt : he
Never imagined the cupboard was empty.
'Hullabaloo ! Look here, you,
This is a regular fine "how d'ye do" :
If she's been taken And thumped or shaken
She's smashed as certain as bacon's bacon,
There's a nice prospect to which to awaken !'

Now whilst he swore And Watmuff wore
A visage of woe never equalled before,
Behold, Mrs. Watmuff walked in at the door.
Her Spouse was o'erjoyed ; Mr. Swift was annoyed,
And bluntly demanded what means she'd employed
To escape from the trap to which she'd been decoyed.
She told them her frozen form never was heated
Because, thanks to Walter, their scheme was defeated.
Watmuff's fate Was desperate :
' Freeze me,' he cried ; ' let me stay in that state :
I can't hope for peace till I'm inanimate !'
But his wife interfered ; He partly had cleared
His character, since his grief really appeared
So great at her death, which he'd caused, he supposed—
And here (as the Press says) ' the Episode closed.'

Cirencester, December, 1897.

POEMS AND VERSES

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LONDON

POEMS AND VERSES

BY

REGINALD LUCAS



PRIVATELY PRINTED

1899

TO
MRS. HEATHCOAT AMORY

*I, who am destined to reside
Where London rolls its swollen tide,
And to my office desk am tied
Six days in seven,
Salute you fair, where you abide,
Down there in Devon.*

*For there have I not seldom spent
Some leisured days of much content,
Despite the fact that Ian's bent
Is energetic,
And, as you know, my temperament
Is antithetic.*

*I don't suppose two men could be
More seemingly unlike than we,
Yet twenty years have given me
No dearer friend ;
None of more loyal constancy
Can Fortune send.*

*Some memories about me cling
Of Hensleigh in the early spring ;
There have I heard the first notes ring
Through copse and field ;
There seen the first primroses bring
Their fragrant yield.*

DEDICATION

*I fancy I can see you go
Along the valley where they grow
Down to the sunny stream below,
And as you walk
I seem to hear my godson's flow
Of endless talk.*

*Lady, this book I pray you take,
For though small interest it wake
In you, this boast I dare to make—
Ev'n were it worse,
You'd still accept it for my sake,
Despite my verse !*

*And if in reading it you trace
Some thought that seems not wholly base,
Be this the tribute I would place,
As only meet
For one whose every thought has grace,
Here at your feet.*

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POEMS AND VERSES

CYRANO DE BERGERAC

ACT III. SCENE 9

ROXANE (*advancing on the balcony*)

Is it you—is it you? Speak of nothing but—

CYRANO

This—

The world for a moment stands still for a kiss :

'Tis no grave transgression ; how easily, dear,

You pass from a smile to a sigh, to a tear ;

Let a pitying tear melt the lips I adore,

'Tis only a moment of impulse—no more—

ROXANE

No, no !

CYRANO

'Tis the speech of the heavens above,

The way the god Cupid would tell you, ' I love ' :

The soul's exclamation, too sacred for words,

The scent of the roses, the love note of birds ;

A vow everlasting that's breathed on the lips,
 As softly as murmurs a bee when he sips
 The honey from flowers—my heart taking wings
 To mingle with yours at the fount whence it springs.

ROXANE

No, no!

CYRANO

'Tis a token of chivalrous pride
 By our Sovereign, our Lady the Queen not denied
 Now and then to the flower of her courtiers—

ROXANE

Well, well!

CYRANO (*with animation*)

I have suffered the passion I trembled to tell,
 As patient as hopeless as Buckingham bore
 For the Queen : so I kneel to the Queen I adore—

ROXANE

And truly not he could excel you in grace :

CYRANO (*aside : dejected*)

Ah me ! I forgot I had dropped my vile face !

ROXANE

Climb hither and seek, then, the scent of the flower,

CYRANO (*pushing CHRISTIAN towards the balcony*)

Climb !

ROXANE

My heart's stream . . .

CYRANO

Climb !

ROXANE

The bee in his bower . . .

CYRANO

Climb !

CHRISTIAN (*hesitating*)

The adventure seems perilous now,
My courage deserts me, I dare not—

ROXANE

The vow

Everlasting. . . .

CYRANO (*pushing him*)

Climb, climb, fool !

CHRISTIAN (*climbing to the balcony*)

Ah, Roxane, at last !

CYRANO

Cyrano, through your heart the last dagger has passed
A kiss—'tis Love's banquet : poor outcast I wait
Like Lazarus, hungry, athirst, at the gate,
My torment assuaged, should she happen to waste
A drop from her chalice—some sweetness I taste

In the thought that the lips, which her lips make divine,
Are kissed for their pleading—the pleading was mine !

[*Hears the guitars*

A sad note ; a gay note—the friar !

[*Pretending to have arrived, running : calls loud*

Hullo !

ROXANE

Who's there ?

CYRANO

I—I happened to pass—Cyrano.

CHRISTIAN (*astonished*)

Cyrano ! Cyrano !

CYRANO

Is young Christian up there ?

ROXANE

Good evening, dear cousin !

CYRANO

My cousin most fair !

A DILEMMA

THE theatre's packed from floor to roof,
The play's the fashion for the minute,
Your modern kind of opera bouffe
With neither plot nor reason in it.

A fellow who can kick his heels,
And sing a comic song with spirit—
That's what to such a house appeals
As showing true artistic merit.

A lady, publicly adored—
(On every lip her 'petit nom' is)
Who once ensnared a stripling lord,
Then ran him in for breach of promise.

They dance, they sing, to great applause,
Their notes are shrill, their limbs are supple,
The audience shout their loud encores—
Except one very silent couple.

Attractive, young, and debonnair,
It's clear they've recently been married,
Whence, then, that very solemn air,
As if they found life dull and arid?

The truth is, all these gems of wit
But distant empty sounds to them are :
This evening they are doomed to sit
Upon the horns of a dilemma.

He finds a lady at his side
With whom his close connection ended
When he took to himself a bride,
Doing, he deemed, as other men did.

But see how things have come about ;
He glows with unaccustomed virtue—
Be sure your sins will find you out,
And, when you least expect it, hurt you.

His bride, he knows, is pure as ice,
He groans to think of his unfitness ;
His life is stained with selfish vice :
Beside him sits the fatal witness.

He lives the reckless past again,
Each scene he ruefully rehearses :
What seemed a harmless frolic then
He turns to now with shame and curses.

Who can undo the deed once done,
And who recall the word once spoken ?
The pitcher dashed against the stone,
By wanton hands, must lie there, broken.

‘Autres temps, autres mœurs,’ with grief distraught

He tears his conscience into tatters—
Poor bridegroom, who till now had thought
That nothing ever really matters !

And she, the chaste, the blameless fair,
Who caused this sudden strange reaction,
Sure nobody would ever dare
To misinterpret her abstraction.

A spotless being, like a star,
From our celestial regions shining,
Regarding evil from afar,
What cause can she have for repining ?

Behold : to this man next to her
Her troth was plighted for a season ;
She jilted him without demur,
For vanity—no other reason.

He offered her his heart and soul,
She wore them lightly as a raiment,
And when wealth on her vision stole
She flung them back and made no payment.

My Lady's overwhelmed, of course,
With shame to find him sitting next her ?
Not she : it's nothing like remorse ;
The sight of him has merely vexed her.

What matter if she's spoilt his life,
Destroyed his faith, wrecked his ambition,
So long as she's a rich man's wife,
And high in social recognition?

Here's a question to decide,
If you think it worth the labour—
Has the bridegroom or the bride
Sinned the worse against their neighbour?

A LETTER

‘The flowers arrived just before she was laid in her coffin, and we placed some of them on her, especially a bit of the orange blossom, feeling that nobody was ever more fit to be a Bride of Heaven.’ (From a letter.)

WELL chosen moment, had I known
Her spirit even now was flown—
Before the coffin was nailed down
 (I thank you, Friend),
You laid with her a spray or so
Of flowers, which some days ago,
From these fair lands where flowers blow,
 I chanced to send.

A humble offering undesigned—
My wish you faithfully divined ;
I search my memory, and find
 I ne’er have given
At times of fête, ’mid scenes of mirth,
A meeter gift, whate’er its worth,
Than this which went with Earth to Earth ;
 Your Bride of Heaven,

But yesterday, was one who sought
To know my fancy—if I thought
Life interesting; surely nought
 Could serve me better,
If I complied with her request,
To prove to her life's interest
Than something which I find confessed,
 Here in your letter.

Some there may be who, year by year,
Live on unstirred by love or fear,
With conscience careless, if not clear,
 Dread no disaster,
Who know not what it is to love,
In generous quest who never strove,
Whose pulse no thoughts of friendship move
 One beat the faster.

But he, who feels the conscious thrill
Of love and anger, careful still
To do the right, eschew the ill,
 Who strives to keep
Faith pure, friends steadfast, honour clean,
Will find life's interest, I ween,
Though tears and failures come between,
 Both wide and deep.

By interest I argue not
Life's drama has a merry plot—
Stern tragedy has been your lot :
 Yet even so

I see its beauties none the less,
Nor hold with those who would profess
We were not born to happiness,
But toil and woe.

I sometimes think the tears that rise
Unbidden to the mourner's eyes,
Come from a fount which purifies
The heart it rends :
God chasteneth His loved ones : yet
He shows us, when our eyes are wet,
That things whereon our hearts are set
Are means, not ends.

But since the end is good, be sure
The means are good : in all things pure
We should rejoice, our griefs endure
With dauntless cheer ;
If haply death's o'ershadowing wings
Should end one sweet soul's sufferings,
Weep not : her passing only brings
God's presence near.

CANNES : *January* 1899.

HUBERT HOWARD

KILLED AT OMDURMAN, 1898

Too narrow, too serene for you
The places where your lines were cast,
The fire of generous quest you knew—
A valiant soul has flashed and passed.

Linked to your land by tenderest ties,
In friendships rich, of promise rare,
You sought the struggle, not the prize,
Went forth and found your pleasure there.

Howard, though I may claim no part
With those whose eyes for you are wet,
Yet I may lay some truth to heart
From that proud standard you have set ;

Who, deeming that life's little span
Is given us to mar or make,
Rose up, and in the fierce Soudan
Laid down your life for honour's sake.

Who shall grudge England England's pride ?
Let no one mourn : what nobler fate
Than, dying, to have testified
Our race is not degenerate ?

CHRISTMAS

ONCE more the day of blessed birth,
Glad time of holiday and mirth,
When all of sweetness, all of worth
 Men's hearts contain,
Breaks forth in thoughts of peace on earth,
 Good will towards men.

And kindly thoughts are interchanged,
And friends, who erstwhile were estranged,
Clasp hands once more ; some who have ranged
 Down devious ways,
Turn home again ; and spite is changed
 To hymns of praise.

And round the merry Christmas tree
The children's laughter ringing free
Wakes old responses deep : ah me,
 What tales it tells,
This blended note of childish glee
 With Christmas Bells !

May Christmas thoughts and Christmas cheer
Never to us seem trite and drear,
Nor we forget that once a year,
 At Christmastide,
Faint memories may be made clear,
 Loose bonds retied.

VARIATIONS

A TEAR in the eye,
A cloud in the sky,
 Where all was so blue—
They pass and are gone ;
Where sun has once shone
 Comes sunshine anew.

When heavens are grey,
Grave thoughts come, and they
 Tell truths to vain minds :
When the eye holds a tear
We sometimes see clear
 Where happiness blinds.

Discontent I detest,
Gloom I pity at best,
 But sweeter by half
Is the temper sedate
Than frivolous prate
 Or meaningless laugh.

The day's at a close—
The glory that rose
 With blue morn is fled ;

But the sun setting there
Has beauty as rare,
All purple and red.

We have doubts of a friend,
And bright days must end,
Then life's in eclipse :
Yet bright days we'll find,
And words that are kind
Will fall from those lips.

'Tis well to be gay
When life's all a-play ;
But honour to him,
Who keeps a brave cheer
When life is a-drear
And visions are dim.

I scan the world round
And one man is found
A hero to me,
Who clouds can defy,
Confront them, and cry
'Silver linings I see !'

TO A CHILD WHOSE DOLL WAS BROKEN

LITTLE girl, what made you cry ?

Eyes like yours weren't meant for tears ;
You'll have sorrows by-and-by,
Make the most of your young years.

What : you've let your dolly fall—

See, the pieces in your hand !
I'll console you, if that's all,
With another, quite as grand.

What : you only cry the more :

You have lost your dearest friend !
One no money can restore,
And, alas, no glue can mend !

Little girl, just now I said

You'd have sorrows by-and-by :
Yet do we lament the dead
With your grief, when our friends die ?

After all I'm not so sure

Grown up griefs are more severe :
Grown up motives aren't so pure ;
Grown up hearts are harder, dear.

Come, don't cry—though now indeed
I'd not have it otherwise,
Since you wept I seem to see
Deeper beauty in your eyes.

Am I selfish? is it well
You should have so soft a heart?
It may cost you—who can tell—
Some day many a cruel smart.

Yet I think that time will prove,
If we put it to the touch,
Those fare worst who never love,
Not those who care overmuch.

'THE DOG IT WAS THAT DIED'

POOR little beast ; must we say good-bye ?

Never a wag for me ?

We've been good comrades, you and I,

Few better friends than we.

Poor little beast ; I didn't know

I had become so fond ;

I learn it just as you've got to go

Out to the world beyond.

Poor little beast ; is it wrong to hope

We are to meet again ?

You soulless brute—no, there can't be scope

In Heaven for you—that's plain.

Poor little beast ; it may be so,

You hadn't a soul to save,

But seldom a truer soul, I know,

Is laid in a Christian grave.

Good-bye, little beast ; I shall miss you sore ;

And I doubt whether human love,

Supposing I won it, could raise me more

To the thoughts of a life above.

Go, dearest bride, my fondest thoughts pursue you,
Yours be the gladness, only mine the pain ;
Yet pain with sweetness, seeing that I knew you
As my friend of friends—love was not all in vain.

WHEN twilight falls the stars come one by one,
And each we think the fairest—time alone
Proves which of all are constant ; so with friends,
Some fail : the few are steadfast till life ends.

TEN RIDES—CIRENCESTER

STRANGE whim of woodcraft, ten concentred ways,
Outbranching like still cloister paths, o'erhung
With woodland canopy : these autumn days
Mock those sweet days when all the world was
 young,
And joyous carols through your boughs were sung ;
Now all is silent—save that somewhere near
 A squirrel trips the withered leaves among,
And dripping mists fall on the saddened ear :
The daylight wanes, and Earth is desolate and drear.

Oh mother Earth, and Heaven, hear my cry !
 Shall you unblamed your pure delights conceal
In gloom of dark eclipse, and may not I
 Confess the burden of the grief I feel,
 When sombre shadows o'er my spirit steal ?
See, all too soon your joy of life is past ;
 Fair blossoms lie dead leaves beneath my heel ;
'Tis so with me, whose hopes are overcast
And ne'er can spring again, so long as life may last.

AT A RAILWAY STATION

WHEN I stand beside the grave of some loved friend
that's lately dead,
My tears flow unresisted, and I bow my vanquished
head,
For Life can never be the same again :
When I stand upon the platform and I see you swept
away,
The same desponding fancies come in merciless
array—
The phantom of a funeral in a train.

There's death in every parting ; so it seems, at least,
to me,
And friendship's an investment without good
security—
To me it is the spending of the soul :
When we are, friend, together, all the Indies' wealth
is mine ;
What is it ? just a moment—then you leave me to
repine
In a bankruptcy no reason can console.

When the angel fell from Heaven he took Love in
ruthless hands,
And with wanton false illusions now he mocks us as
he stands,

Till we scarce can tell the false love from the true :
But for all our faults and failures there is one thing
makes amends,
One thing makes Life worth living—'tis the friend-
ship of our friends ;
And, Lady, that's the store I set on you.

RUDYARD KIPLING: AN IMITATION

TAKE up the White Man's burden—
Not yet your course is run,
The day is still for labour,
Not yet the goal is won—
By brief and sudden flashes
To pierce to nature's core,
And probe its secret meanings,
The springs untouched before.

Take up the White Man's burden—
The endless wars of peace,
The striving of attainment,
The hungry hearts' increase,
Who found us blindly groping
Like children towards the light,
Who led us by your magic
And ruled us by your might.

Take up the White Man's guerdon—
The princely gift of speech,
To fill our hearts with wonder
And pleasure those you teach—

The port you nearly entered,
The path you nearly trod—
Come, tell us of their meaning,
Man's destiny with God.

IMPROMPTU—FOR MUSIC

February 25, 1899

IF I could only love to-day
As I loved long ago ;
If all the world were always May
And Spring would never go :

If I had only loved but one,
And that one had been you ;
Then constancy in you I'd won,
And I'd be always true.

Since winter winds must always blow,
And winter winds are cold ;
Since wintry age checks youth's full flow,
And love itself grows old—

'Tis well to know that here and there
Faith has not learnt to die—
In spite of all, you still may dare
Be constant—so may I !

LITTLE girl, I love you so,
Though you never think of it ;
Some day may-be you will know—
Now you never think of it.

Some day when the skies are drear,
Though you may not think of it,
Then I know you'll help me, dear—
Then may-be you'll think of it.

COME swallow, come swallow, from over the sea,
I know you are bringing a message to me ;
Come swallow, come swallow, I know that you bring
An end to the Winter, a promise of Spring.

Come swallow, come swallow, your passage is swift,
The noon has a shadow, the lute has a rift ;
Come swallow, and tell me 'tis vain to despond,
Though storm clouds may threaten, there's sunshine
beyond.

AURA SACRA

IT came from afar with the singing winds,
It came from the depths of the sea ;
It came from above where the skies are blue,
And it told a tale to me.

It spoke with a voice I could not hear,
It drew with a hand unseen,
And it told of things I knew were true,
Of things I knew had been.

It told of Love and deathless deeds,
And proffered them to me—
But it told of things I knew were not,
And, ah, can never be !

THE thought of the poet was in my brain,
Though I had not the poet's art :
And I sought for the word, but I sought in vain—
And you were in my heart :

Till I spoke you fair, and was not afraid
(And I spoke you not in vain) ;
And straight from my heart were the words I said—
And I was a poet then !

EPIGRAMS

THAT 'Manners maketh man' old Wykeham taught ;
That these make Ladies too, it might be thought :
Wit, beauty, spirit, oft together brought,
By lack of Manners are made less than naught.

What makes a Gentleman ? Who shall decide ?
Wit, valour, breeding, pedigree, or pride ?
He's only gentle who, whate'er betide,
For others' comfort sets his own aside.

On what do men approval most bestow ?
On such achievements as we have to show ?
On *what* we are or *who* we are ? Not so—
They only value us by, whom we know !

One chid me thus, ' Seek not Perfection here :
'Twill end in disappointment.'—Never fear ;
With hope undaunted and with faith sincere
Who seeks Perfection, will arrive most near.

It is not well incessantly to laugh,
Nor Pleasure's chalice overmuch to quaff
Who lives to laugh, lives only for the day ;
Who cares for graver pleasures, cares always.

What time the Gods armed Cupid with his darts,
And bade him, for his sport, go breaking hearts,
They gave the God who tends the healing arts
A balm called Friendship, to assuage our smarts.

As one who listens to a sweet refrain,
And crudely tries to echo it again,
So I, who seem to hear the Muses' strain,
Strive to re-echo it—in vain, in vain !

The man who thinks himself complete
Possesses what we call *conceit* ;
The man is *vain* who wants to know
That other people think him so.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

MASTER, whose life was all too early spent,
Sweet singer, great romancer, thou hast sent
One truth abroad, surpassing all in beauty,
That Cheerfulness should be our foremost duty.

WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM

ON the spur of the moment write something!—I vow
I certainly would, if I only knew how ;
But if it were rubbish, your page were defaced
For ever, and I'd be for ever disgraced.

Believe me, I'd rather sign only my name—
The motive I flatter myself you'll not blame—
The Muse loves me not, yet the gods condescend
To grant me this boon—to sign here as your Friend.

TO THE HON. FRANCES WOLSELEY

LADY, whose father long since stripped
Wreaths from the brow of Fame,
In vain my modest pen were dipped
In tribute to your name.

Though I might spin my dogg'el verse
To you for half a year,
One word your honours might rehearse,
As thus—Tel-el-Kebir.

Yet this distinction I may draw,
These honours to increase :
His conquests were achieved in war,
And yours in time of peace.

TO A LADY WHO HAD AN ALBUM

I FIND when I look
At one page of your book,
A picture replete with fine feeling—
Crowds of moths round a flame
(You're enshrined in the same)
All a-scorching their wings beyond healing.

They fall one by one,
And you laugh at the fun,
Little heeding their frantic death flutters,
But I'm sure you'd be stirred
To the soul if you heard
The cry that the dying moth utters.

Let the truth be confessed—
I am burnt like the rest,
And sing like a swan *in extremis*,
Which I do 'cause I ain't
Like your friend who can paint,
But like him 'tis of you that my theme is.

I mean to convey,
Though unworthy as they
So much as to fasten your sandal,
I'll never complain
If I'm ranked with the slain,
For the game was well worth *such* a candle !

AN OFFICIAL LETTER

A WORD from your lips or a smile from your eyes,
Dear lady, I prize :
I am, if you give me a thought now and then,
The proudest of men :
I read, then —conceive with what boundless delight—
The verses you write.

At present I'm sitting pretending to work
(Dull labours that irk) :
All the time I am thinking—(this really is true)—
Of nothing but you :
Which accounts for the fact that my work when perused,
Is sometimes confused.

I've just been engaged on a Treasury Minute—
How came your name in it ?
It referred to a man who made claim to a pension :
How came I to mention
For one kind word from you I'd exchange without
murmur
The riches of Burmah ?

Yet I've done it—(the paper was purely official)—
And signed my initial :
The heads of Department will p'raps be astonished,
And I'll be admonished :
But I'll show them your rhyme, if they dare to abuse
me
—And then they'll excuse me !

Treasury, S. W.

TO A LADY WITH A BOOK OF VERSES

THIS little book I give to you,
Don't treat it with contempt ;
It's 'mediocre' through and through,
From twaddle not exempt.

Just what the book is, so am I,
And yet you condescend,
With all my faults—I know not why—
To treat me as your friend.

The best my feeble wit can give
Herein you'll find revealed—
The best that's in me, while I live
To you, not less, I'll yield.

*TO A LADY WHO CONFESSED SHE HAD
DISLIKED ME*

FOR no reason assigned
You say you inclined
With disapprobation to view me :
Now you graciously own
You've altered your tone,
You found me 'all right when you knew me.'

I am anxious to know
What made you do so—
I fear it was only your charity,
For I'm seldom exempt
From that fatal contempt
That follows on familiarity.

I'm quite reconciled
To be freely reviled
When I'm known ; but I don't mind confessing
I take it amiss
In addition to this
That at first sight I'm unprepossessing.

I think it but fair
I should frankly declare
For you I've felt no variation—
I need not deny
When you first met my eye
You struck me with deep admiration.

Here's a contrast, you see—
First impression with me
Is the right one (your own case has proved it) —
First impression with you
Let me hope is not true,
Since I gave . . . well you say I've removed it!

OVERHEARD IN THE STREET

'It was a fine party : there were coronetted coaches at the door.'

WHEN first from his provincial town Joe Brown to
London came,

He hadn't got much money, and he wasn't known to
fame

(But this of course was in the days of yore):

He saw the best of company, although they didn't
meet—

He watched with green-eyed jealousy, in passing
down the street,

The coronetted coaches at the door.

He gauged the situation, and he made some mighty
'specs,'

Which made his fortunes flourish, though it left some
others wrecks

(A fact he hadn't leisure to deplore):

He promptly paid his footing with some swells a
trifle down,

Who undertook to bring with them the noblest of
the town

In coronetted coaches to his door.

He bought himself a palace, and he called himself De
Brune,

He gave a splendid concert to Society in June

(And parties, luncheons, banquettings galore):

And those who weren't invited were particularly
pained,

For his parties were the smartest, and whene'er he
entertained,

There were coronetted coaches at the door.

But he found the life exacting—it required endless
cash ;

Before the year was over there were symptoms of a
crash

(A weakness which to mention he forbore):

And then he tried malpractices, which brought him
to the dock :

The court was densely crowded, and Society did
flock

In coronetted coaches to the door.

Five years the Judge awarded—and they locked him
up in gaol :

And here's the termination of my interesting tale

(I dare say you'd be glad if there were more):

Unless I'm much mistaken he is in his prison now—

But no one goes to visit him, and you will find, I
trow,

No coronetted coaches at the door !

A TRILOGY

ONE year, about the month of May,
When London was becoming gay,
And fond mamas from winter quarters
Were bringing up their charming daughters,
To see if they could hope with reason
To get them married in the season—
(The cynics say that's all they care for
I give it as their motive, therefore) ;
When noon finds thronged with highest tone
The street named after Sir Hans Sloane,
And youth and beauty until dark
Delight to linger in the Park,
Then dress and dine, go to a ball,
Or theatre (may be music-hall),
But rise, however late they go
To bed, and ride in Rotten Row ;
When nobody has time to think,
No time for Prince's Skating Rink,
Where nearly all one's time is spent
From autumn now, right up to Lent ;
No time to talk to anyone
(There's always too much to be done),

No time to be much more than civil,
And wish most people at the—other end of London,
Live in a chronic state of rush,
Of rattle, chatter, scramble, push—
When one mama is taking stock
Of dear Maria's nice new frock
And thinking that with all this dressing
She somehow isn't prepossessing ;
And one hears with unchastened pride
Her daughter's looks praised far and wide—
And while they all, as bold as bronze,
Are vowing that their geese are swans,
And that their swans will surely soar
As swans have never soared before—
In this state of anticipation,
Anxiety, exhilaration,
A portent on their vision flashed,
And all their fondest hopes were dashed :
A triple portent—who could hope
With these three prodigies to cope ?

The year in question chanced to be
Our Gracious Sovereign's Jubilee :
From every clime loyal subjects steered
To see the Monarch they revered ;
And it can hardly be denied
It was a matter for some pride ;
But when emotion had died down
All honest folks were heard to own

That, though we may not see again
So great and glorious a reign,
They made the year the great success
It was—that much they'd all confess.

First, by enraptured eyes descried,
See from Lough Erne's unruffled tide
Mounting the moonbeams' silver stair,
Passes a maiden, flawless, fair :
Ye meaner beauties, disappear—
What chance have ye, when she is here ?

Next from the Minster's cloistered shade
' Good ' comes embodied in a maid ;
Celestial beauty such as thine
Were fit to dwell by holy shrine ;
Thy name well chosen—since rash youth
Might haply fail to grasp this truth,
That spite thy smile, thy frolic mirth,
Thou art of no low mortal birth.

So far all others they outshone
You might have deemed they stood alone :
Yet somewhere in the Caves of Time
A maid was hid not less sublime,
As gracious, as enchanting fair
(Her shrine stands in Cadogan Square) :
A gem more precious far she shines
Than e'er was drawn from Burmah's mines.

Behold these three ! in rapt amaze
A wondering public stands at gaze ;
And every man falls on his knees,
And now has eyes for none but these :
But matrons don't exactly beam
To see them floating there supreme,
Exalted in a rarer blue
(Whatever will their own dears do ?).
Society's turned upside down,
Despairing swains go forth to drown
As recklessly as if to swim
(The Serpentine's full to the brim) :
And spinsterhood's the common lot,
The marriage service half forgot.
Oh, fatal year, the Gods had wrought
The very mischief, just for sport—
And men they've led a pretty dance,
To other women left no chance !

Meanwhile the peerless three remain
Alone, unrivalled ; and 'tis plain
That this is the millennium
When things to true perfection come—
For though this world some time may last,
Their charms shall never be surpassed.

PROLOGUE¹

HAIL, Amateurs ! hail, lovers of the Muse
Of Drama ! Come, your story we'll peruse ;
Discover wherefore, with such fervent heart,
Unstirred by hope of gain you play your part ;
For mere delight why stamp, and mouth, and utter,
Since what's your sport to some is bread and butter ;
Why no *rôle* daunts you ; why with conscience clear
You dare rush in where actors tread with fear.
No sordid aim is yours ; no love of pelf ;
You take consummate pains for love of—self ?
I wonder if you'd misconstrue me were I
To say 'tis pleasant *digito monstrari* :
No effort yet to full achievement came
Without the whispered blandishments of Fame ;
Then, sure, when Art's your object sole and single,
Some love of Fame with love of Art may mingle.
I blame you not : what need to make excuse
For those who put their talents to good use ?
Here's one can sing : who wants to drown his song ?
Here's one can paint ; who says his painting's wrong ?

¹ *Amateur Clubs and Actors.* Edited by W. G. Elliot. (Edward Arnold, 1898.)

One may not put to shame the nightingales,
He's therefore not obliged to stick to scales ;
And one, if no old masters he outshines,
Need not be kept for ever to straight lines.
I've heard the songs of amateurs applauded,
Thought they were right to sing, and wished that
more did :

Indeed, towards amateurs indulgence stretches,
Sometimes, so far as to admire their sketches.
What then ! if these are able to give pleasure,
By cultivating Nature's gifts at leisure,
And find themselves in general admired
By reason of the prowess they've acquired,
Why should not those, who feel the aspiration
For Drama, strive, within such limitation,
Not trifling, but in earnest—(never was time
Well spent in trifling yet at work or pastime)—
To turn to use the talent that's within them,
Look to the laurels and resolve to win them ?
For my part I deem him a splendid fellow
Who blacked himself throughout to play Othello :
No London, no provincial town or borough,
Can surely boast professional more thorough.
He *felt* the part, and when the boards he trod he
Became Othello, heart and soul—and body !
That prince of amateurs may stand alone,
No need to take his colour ; yet his tone
Suits you exactly ; let it be conceded
All honest players must go in as he did :

And unto such as choose 'to go the whole hog,'
Be offered, as a tribute due, this Prologue.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the line of whom
Bids fair to 'stretch out to the crack of doom,'
Most delicate the task upon me thrust is,
How can I hope to do you all due justice?
Impartial commendation is the thing wished,
Fit tribute to such names as are distinguished
By honourable mention in these annals;
But truly there are few of this world's channels
Down which they have not passed, and who shall
group

In orderly review so vast a troop?
First take the Stage itself: no meagre band,
Brookfield and Elliot, Clark and Bouchier stand,
Graduates all, who took a high degree
Once in O.U.D.S. or A.D.C.
Bouchier, old friend, those days are now 'lang syne,'
When at your smoking 'My Dame' drew the line
(As Elliot tells): Ah, with what zeal we burned
Each Saturday when Pupil-Room was turned
Into a theatre (*pace* Mr. Tarver,
'Twasn't *sub rosa*; after some palaver
'The Head' had granted us our acting licence):
It may be we were artists in no high sense—
Your troupe I mean—yet you may well declare
As Actor-Manager you first 'starred' there.
Swift-footed, nimble-witted, ready writer,

Dear Willie Elliot, chronicler, reciter :
No name finds mention in the book you edit
Reflecting on the Order greater credit.
You wear a shield won in a race at Eton,
Life's one long race, and may you ne'er be beaten !
In high official places next look round ;
What name is there more worthy to be found
Amongst the honoured ranks of G.C.B.
Than he who helped to found I Zingari ?
The old order changeth, yielding place to new :
Of your old friends, Sir Spencer, not a few
Have left the stage for ever, yet be sure
Your fame and theirs is 'stablisht and secure,
And still the famous legends shall be told
Beneath the banners of red, black, and gold.
Here's one who sometimes left the beaten path
To tread the boards with you, Sir H. de Bathe,
Well known as 'Sergeant Bouncer,' on half-pay
(General, late Scots Guards, also, by the way).
Lord Harris, of your compeers none or few
Have been cast for as many parts as you ;
Cricketer, statesman, Governor of Bombay,
Courtier, and sportsman, actor, who can say
His record is as full of 'runs' as yours ?
Unless 'twere Yardley : he once made great scores ;
And now writes plays, wherein he still makes 'hits,'
A critic, too, who 'cuts' bad plays to bits.
See, next, who wear the Church's reverend cloth,
Lawley and Adderley, famed actors both.

What soldiers, next, have faced the footlights' flare ?
All lines of fire, they're ever prompt to dare,
For soldiers, surely, know what to be brave is,
And never audience daunted Newnham Davies ;
Nor gay George Nugent, Guardsman many-sided,
Who once some excellent burlesque provided,
Now handles troops (at Islington) with skill,
Does many things, and never does them ill.
Barrington Foote and Liddell, Gunners twain,
Cum multis aliis swell the soldiers' train.
In Politics, James Lowther, chosen rightly
To fill the Chair, draws crowded Houses nightly ;
Stage managers like him are seldom seen,
Who like 'gag' better than a stirring 'scene' !
Gravely intent upon affairs of State,
In comedy as apt as in debate,
See Bromley-Davenport ; sure no M.P.
Can touch life at more diverse points than he.
I scan the Civil Service and I miss,
Official now no longer, Quintin Twiss ;
Let's hope, though he's abandoned his Profession,
From Amateurs he threatens no secession.
Here's one, his colleague oft in days of yore,
Augustus Spalding, rich in theatre lore :
'Stagers' and 'Strollers' these of large renown,
The high traditions careful to hand down,
The which to guard and carry on are summoned
Alan Mackinnon here, there Charlie Drummond ;
This one and that (you'll find them in these pages),

Called to prolong the tale to after ages.
My sense of courtesy may be aspersed
For disobeying this rule, 'Ladies first':
Yes; but the reason it was disobeyed is,
Words fail me when I come to speak of ladies:
In such a case few things there are that women hate
Worse than a critic trying to discriminate:
Herein no wish to criticise is hinted,
To all alike my homage flows unstinted:
It may be I have my own predilection,
And think that one alone has reached perfection,
Endowed by Nature and enriched by Art,
One in my humble judgment stands apart;
I name no names; if I began commending
Each one by name, this rhyme would have no ending:
God bless them all! long life to Wit and Beauty!
For them to go on acting is a duty,
That we may see life's limitations dwindle,
Beneath the spreading ray bright fancies kindle:
Potential heroines, may they extract
Joy from real life, weep only when they act!

And what of those who've played their part, and seen
Death's curtain fall; whose memory is green
As grows the grass upon their graves? I wis
We ask no kinder destiny than this:—
To play each part assigned us with good will,
Not envious, but ambitious, striving still
To pluck from life its sweets, see all things fair,

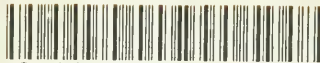
Bind fast the ties of friendship, prompt to share
Prosperity with all, as prompt to give
Aid in adversity, and so to live
That on our tombs this epitaph may run :—
'Here lies the friend of all, the foe of none.'

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